

AVOID REDUNDANCY TO AVOID LOSS OF HEALTH AND LIFE

In an article in the New York Times, 25 February 2010, Micheal Luo launches the discomfiting subject of the impacts of job loss upon individual health with an account of heart attacks, and death, among workers within weeks of the closure of a steel plant in New York state. But this article is about more than these coincident events. It provides ready reference to various studies which indicate direct relationships between job loss and increased frequencies of many serious and life-threatening health problems. This article may be read at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/25/us/25stress.html>

Two of the article's citations are particularly compelling. In the first, a study by Gallo *et al.* (2006) of the Yale School of Public Health, *The impact of late career job loss on myocardial infarction and stroke: a 10 year follow up using the health and retirement survey*, (*Occup Environ Med.*, Oct;63(10):683-7) using data available in the US Health and Retirement Survey shows that the frequency of just these well-defined conditions among those who had suffered involuntary job loss was twice that of those who remained in employment.

The second and more recent study, accessed directly through Google:: *Job Displacement and Mortality: An Analysis using Administrative Data* (2009) by Daniel Sullivan and Till von Wachter, is drawn from matched data sets of those continuing in employment with those involuntarily terminated from the same employment through many years after the time of termination.

Quoting from Luo's article about this study, "The paper, by Till von Wachter, a Columbia University economist, and Daniel G. Sullivan, director of research at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, examined death records and earnings data in Pennsylvania during the recession of the early 1980s and concluded that death rates among high-seniority male workers jumped by 50 percent to 100 percent in the year after a job loss, depending on the worker's age. Even 20 years later, deaths were 10 percent to 15 percent higher. That meant a worker who lost his job at age 40 had his life expectancy cut by a year to a year and half." This appears to be a very careful analysis which some may prefer to overlook.

Surely, the message these articles bring to Sussex at this moment is clear. Imposing job loss with enforced redundancy, or even the threat of redundancy, is to risk lives. It is high time, and not too late, to give serious constructive thought to alternatives.

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