

Job insecurity, labour market chances and decline in self-rated health in Denmark

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Background

- Several studies have shown that unemployment increases the risk of morbidity and mortality
- There are only a few prospective studies (e.g., the British Whitehall II Study) that have analyzed if also the threat of unemployment (i.e., job insecurity) impacts health
- Generalisation of study findings across countries are difficult to make, because the national context (e.g., unemployment benefit system, labour market chances) is probably of high importance

The Danish flexicurity model

Flexibility for the employers in Denmark:

- Employers can easily hire and dismiss people

Social Security for the employees:

- Employees, can receive relatively high unemployment benefits
- The Danish authorities conduct an active labour market policy, including job trainings and information about job openings, but also pressure on the unemployed to actively seek and accept new job offers

Job insecurity and health in Denmark: Hypotheses

- Job insecurity will predict a decline in health, also under the specific conditions of the Danish flexicurity system
- The effect will be stronger among employees who have poor chances on the labour market
- The effect will be also stronger among young and middle-aged employees who do not have a chance to escape into Denmark's relatively generous early retirement schemes

Methods

- 3,727 employees from the Danish Work Environment Cohort Study were followed-up for 5 years (1995-2000)
- Job insecurity and labour market chances measured by self-report in 1995
- Self-rated health measured in 1995 and 2000

Job insecurity and labour market chances

1. Are you worried about becoming unemployed?
 - Yes, No
2. Are you worried that it would be difficult for you to find another job if you became unemployed?
 - Yes, No

Construction of 3 groups

- No job insecurity (“No” to question 1, regardless of question 2)
- Job insecurity and good labour market chances (“Yes” to 1 and “No” to 2)
- Job insecurity and poor labour market chances (“Yes” to 1 and “Yes” to 2)

Self-rated health

- In general, how would you rate your health?
 - Very good, good, fair, poor, very poor
- Categorized in two groups:
 - Very good & good = "Good health"
 - Fair, poor & very poor = "Reduced health"
- Decline in health:
 - Moving from the "Good health" category in 1995 to the "Reduced health" category in 2000

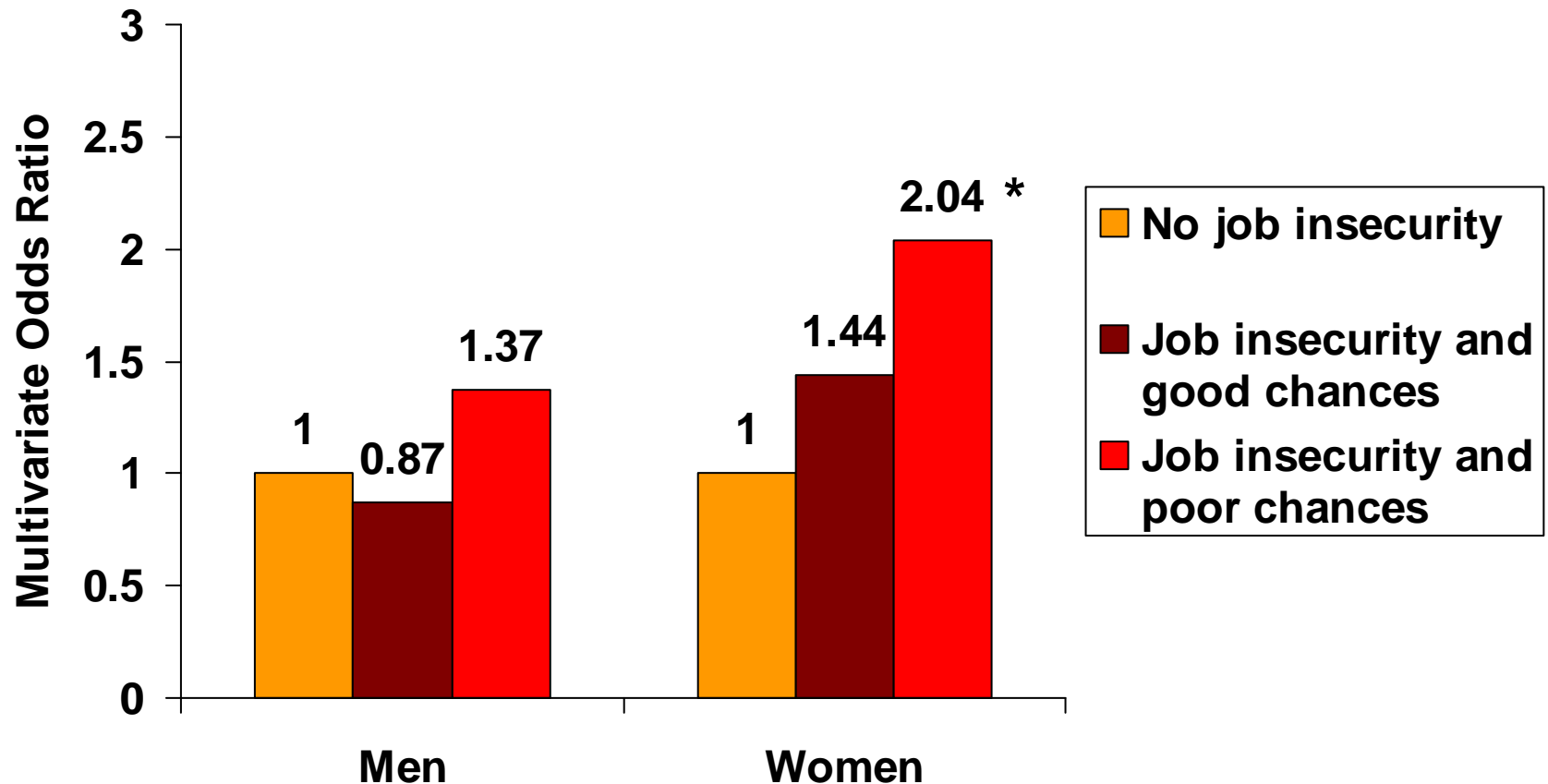
Data Analyses

- Participants with “Reduced Health” at baseline were excluded from the analyses
- Multivariate logistic regression models, stratified by gender
- Odds ratios are adjusted for: Age, smoking, body-mass index, cohabitation, small children at home, socioeconomic position, public/private employment and good vs. very good self-rated health at baseline

Results

- Job insecurity
 - No: n=3,095 (83%)
 - Yes, good labour market chances: n=334 (9%)
 - Yes, poor labour market chances: n=298 (8%)
- Decline in self-rated health during follow-up
 - No: n=3,297 (88.5%)
 - Yes: n=430 (11.5%)

Job insecurity and labour market chances in 1995 and risk of a decline in self-rated health between 1995 to 2000

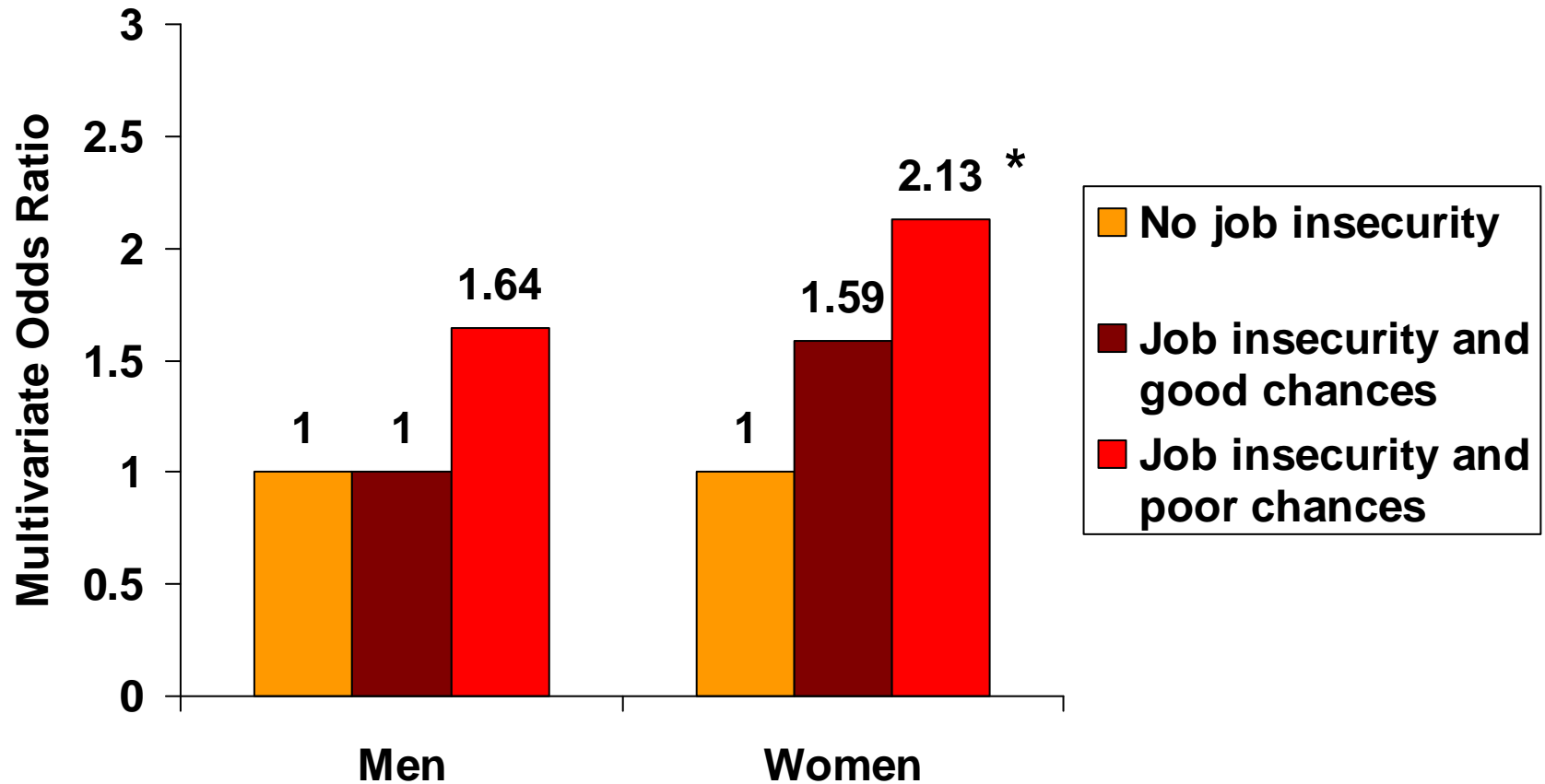


* 95% Confidence Interval does not include 1



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Job insecurity and labour market chances in 1995 and risk of a decline in self-rated health between 1995 to 2000 (employees ≤ 50)



* 95% Confidence Interval does not include 1

Strengths of the study

- Representative sample of the Danish workforce
- Not only job insecurity but also labour market chances were taken into consideration
- Adjustment for a wide range of covariates

Limitations of the study

- Both exposure and endpoint was based on self-report
- Job insecurity measured only at baseline, might have changed for some participants during follow-up

Thank you!

The results are published in:

Rugulies, R. Aust, B., Burr, H. & Bültmann, U. Job insecurity, chances on the labour market and decline in self-rated health in a representative sample of the Danish workforce. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 2008;62(3):245-250

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