

Monday, 9 May 2016

## How worsening job security impacts mental health: gradually for women but as one sharp shock for men

**Employees who rate their job security as ‘very poor’ are over 50% more likely than those with a ‘very good’ sense of security to suffer anxiety, stress or depression—and it’s the case for both women and men, new data from Roy Morgan Research shows.**

However while the incidence of these mental health issues rises incrementally among women as their job security deteriorates, among men it’s more black and white. These are among the findings of a major study from 2013 to 2015 of over 20,000 Australians about their employment.

One in three Australian employees (33%) report suffering anxiety, stress, and/or depression within the past 12 months—but there is a clear correlation between sense of job security and mental health: 30% of employees with ‘very good’ or ‘good’ job security suffered from one or more of these conditions, compared with 35% of those who rated security as ‘fair’, 41% of those who rated it as ‘poor’, and 46% of employees with ‘very poor’ job security.

We recently reported highlights of some big differences in the [occupations with the best and worst job security](#). But despite the inherent gender gaps in many professions, in the end there is almost no difference between male and female job security across the scale. Instead, there is a bigger difference between the sexes in just how sensitively the incidence of mental health conditions rises as job security deteriorates.

Women are, overall, more likely to suffer from anxiety, stress and/or depression than men: although 33% of employees reported these mental health issues overall, it’s 41% among females and 27% among males.

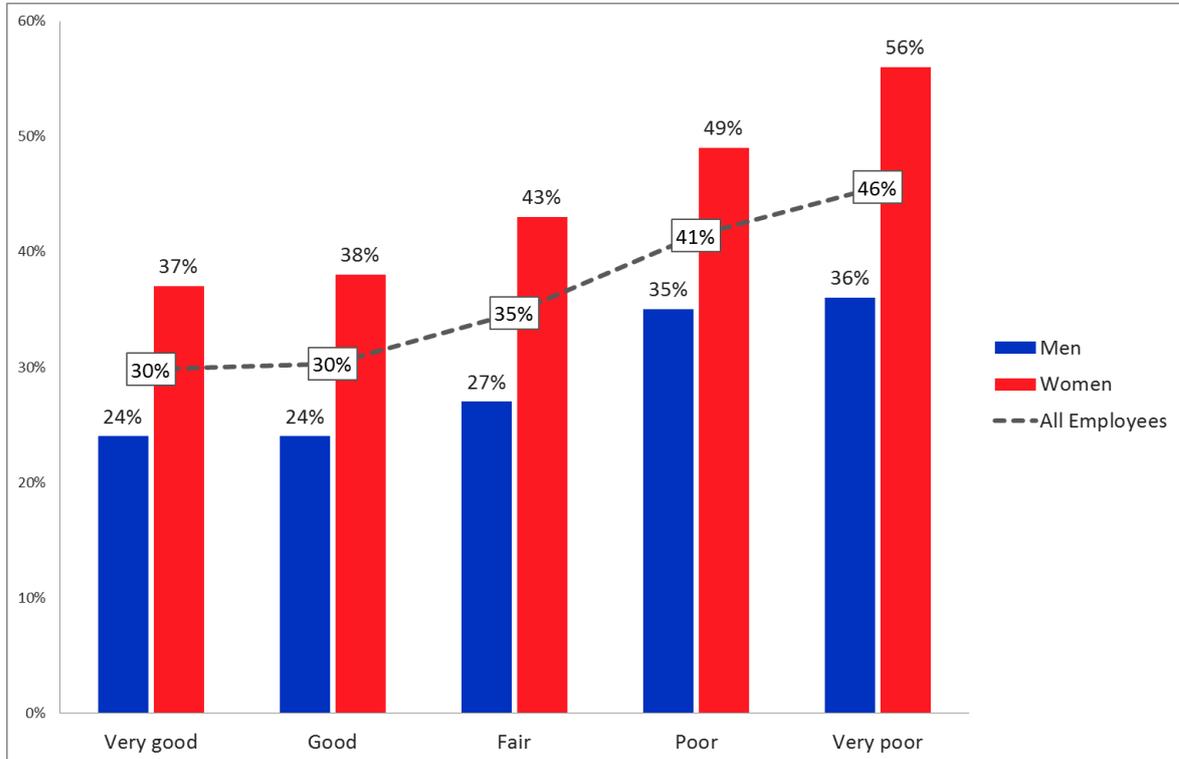
Among employed women, incidence of anxiety, stress and/or depression increases with each stepped reduction in job security down the scale: 37% of employed women with ‘very good’ job security report suffering one or more of these mental conditions, which rises to 38% of those with ‘good’ job security, 43% of those with ‘fair’ job security, 49% of those with ‘poor’ job security and a majority 56% of working women who rate job security as ‘very poor’.

The incidence of mental health conditions is also much higher among employed men with poor security than good—but unlike women, the deterioration comes mostly in one big shift. There’s no difference in mental well-being between men with ‘very good’ or ‘good’ job security, with 24% of both groups reporting anxiety, stress and/or depression. A ‘fair’ sense of job security does have a moderate impact, with incidence of these mental health issues rising to 27%. However as soon as job security turns ‘poor’, incidence jumps to 35% of men. Following this hefty increase in mental health issues at the point of feeling *any* insecurity, there’s only a marginal increase in to 36% among those with the worst sense of job security.

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But although women appear to be more sensitive to incremental changes in job security and men are more immune until the moment it turns negative, among both sexes those employees who feel most insecure in their jobs are over a third more likely than their gender average to suffer mental health issues.

**% of Employees by Job Security who suffer Anxiety, Stress and/or Depression**



**Source:** Nationwide representative sample of 23,548 Australians 14+ in paid employment conducted over 2013-2015 as part of Roy Morgan Single Source.

**Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan Research, says:**

*“This new research shows a correlation between job security and mental well-being. The more insecure employees feel, the greater their incidence of anxiety, stress or depression. This could also act as a feedback loop, with anxious, stressed or depressed workers perhaps judged by employers as less capable or hard-working, and so indeed less securely employed.*

*“It’s interesting that mental health issues arise at different rates among male and female employees. Incremental changes in job security affect women, whereas men feel the impacts in a more black and white way. This may be in part because, as our research has also found, women have a greater need for job security—regardless of whether they are the main bread-winner or not.*

*“Although employed men are much more likely to be the household’s main income earner (81% compared with 52% of women in paid employment), it’s women who are actually the more likely to need job security (71% agree, compared with 67% of working men). In fact, even just among the nearly half of working women who aren’t the home’s primary earner, 68% nevertheless say they need job security.*

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*“Mental Health is the worst-performing of the seven key health areas monitored in the new [Medibank Better Health Index](#), powered by Roy Morgan Single Source. Despite solid gains in areas such as Nutrition and Fitness, the Index shows Australia’s mental well-being has been declining since mid-2010.*

*“Roy Morgan Research has monitored the views of employed Australians for over a decade. The review covers job satisfaction and the relationship between satisfaction and employees’ perceptions of pay, recognition, security, and opportunities, as well as cultural issues such as focus on continual improvement, training, customer service, and how employees’ ideas are handled by management. The research also monitors trends in attitudes to work-life balance, and the use of paid services such as child care and home cleaning.*

*“Next week we’ll be looking at the different levels of pay satisfaction between men and women, and examining the potential impacts on long-term income inequality.”*

**For comments or more information about Roy Morgan Research’s employment data, call (+61) (3) 9224 5309 or email [askroymorgan@roymorgan.com](mailto:askroymorgan@roymorgan.com)**

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**About Roy Morgan Research**

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices throughout Australia, as well as in Indonesia, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years’ experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

**Margin of Error**

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

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