

## **Absenteeism revisited - The impact of working conditions and household context**

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### **Abstract**

The empirical evidence on absenteeism is rather ambiguous to date and does not provide a clear picture of the determinants of employees' absence from their work places. While some empirical findings seem to be quite robust across a multitude of studies (e.g. seasonal fluctuations of absenteeism and correlation of absenteeism and the unemployment rate respectively the occupational status), others are mixed. The latter concerns particularly the gender variable. We will investigate the gender issue in extending the focus from the standard set of economically relevant variables (e.g. education, tenure, income) to working and health conditions and to the household context. By doing so, we will shed light on earlier GSOEP-based results (see Thalmaier 2002) according to which women have persistently higher absenteeism rates than men.

Usually, the higher absenteeism rate for women is explained (somewhat ad hoc) by family context variables such as the presence of (small) children, household members in need of care, household size and the corresponding caring and household duties. Theoretically and empirically, comparatively little attention has been paid to the work places, particularly the working conditions, of frequently absent women so far. Though, research has shown that women are more often exposed to psychologically demanding working conditions than men.

Apart from individual and household information, the GSOEP includes various information on work place characteristics in terms of physical and psychological or mental working conditions. We will exploit this information by analyzing the relationship of these "hard" and "soft" work place factors and absenteeism, while conditioning on the household context. Our analysis will be guided by an extended theoretical model of individual workplace absenteeism which also covers longitudinal aspects. Our empirical analysis will focus on the years 1985, 1987, 1995 and 2001 - those GSOEP waves including detailed information on both working conditions and absenteeism.

#### Reference:

Thalmaier, Anja (2002): *Eine ökonomische Analyse von Fehlzeiten*. Frankfurt/Main et al.: Lang.

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