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**Working for the  
greater good**

Inspiring people, designing jobs and leading  
organizations for a more inclusive society

**Abstract Book**

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## **State of the Art**

In Australian universities, high email volumes and increasing levels of psychological strain (work stress) can affect employees' health and well-being and are likely to have direct consequences on recruiting and retaining high quality academic staff, the teaching of future professionals, and the university sector's growth in national and international markets.

## **New Perspectives**

The paper presents the results of longitudinal and cross-sectional research on work stress in Australian universities; details initiatives taken by university management to enhance well-being; and focuses on employees' coping mechanisms to deal with work stress.

## **Research/Practical Implications**

In addition to university stress interventions, it is important to examine changes that employees make themselves to cope with stress. They may attribute the changes to increased personal growth and strengthened psychological resources or to the use of negative or protective coping strategies. Employees report using types of 'positive' coping strategies, which suggests that they may attempt to conserve and protect their resources. However, academics in particular, report using protective coping strategies to reduce stress that include not caring at all and making decisions to work less which suggests that they have become disengaged or detached, and their work performance may be reduced in the long term.

## **Originality/Value**

As the theory and evidence regarding investigations of work stress in universities is incomplete in several ways, the session examines initiatives taken by both management and employees themselves to address their health and well-being, which is of interest to the community as well as governments, employers and unions.

**Quality of life at work in academia: preliminary results for the validation of a tool for Italian university**

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Andreina Bruno - Università di Genova

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*Purpose:* Research on quality of working life in academia appears surprisingly rare in many countries, and in some cases nearly absent. Trying to fill this gap, a team formed by W/O psychologists from 16 Italian universities developed a tool for the assessment of psychosocial risks as well as workers health and wellbeing in universities. The validation of this tool (theoretically based on the Job Demands-Resources model) will be presented in this contribution.

*Design:* A pilot study was conducted on a sample of 120 Italian university researchers/teachers, to make a preliminary test of the psychometric properties of the tool. In order to finalize the validation of the tool a second study was planned on a sample of 1500 researchers/teachers.

*Results:* Factorial analysis and reliability check reported satisfying and promising evidence of the robustness of the tool.

*Limitations:* The pilot nature of the study only allowed us to obtain preliminary results, that should be further examined on a wider sample. The second study will help to support these preliminary results with a more robust confirmatory approach.

*Practical Implications:* Results indicated that the proposed tool is reliable and could be used for depicting university researchers/teachers' health, wellbeing, and working conditions. Moreover, useful insights for implementing organizational interventions could also be obtained.

*Originality/Value:* The tool, proposed by a team of W/O psychologists from 16 Italian universities, aims to offer the academic community with a scientifically reliable diagnostic tool, able to suggest also useful insights for the improvement of working conditions and wellbeing.

### **Quality of work life in Czech public universities: Job demands, job resources and occupational well-being**

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*Purpose:* Relatively little research attention has been paid to effects of changing academic environments on faculty well-being in higher education systems at the periphery, including the Czech Republic.