

Research Article



The association between dependent self-employment and self-reported depression/anxiety and sleep disorder in South Korea

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

ABSTRACT

Background: Dependent self-employment is precarious employment, which can be vulnerable to mental health problems. This study aimed to investigate the association of dependent self-employment with depression, anxiety, and sleep disorder in South Korea.

Methods: This study used data from the Fourth Korean Working Conditions Survey and included 32,691 paid workers. Dependent self-employment and self-reported depression/anxiety, and sleep disorder were investigated using a questionnaire. Logistic regression analysis was performed to investigate the association between dependent self-employment and mental health problems.

Results: Of the 32,691 paid workers, 2,371 (7.3%) were dependent self-employed workers. The odds ratio (OR) of dependent self-employment for self-reported depression/anxiety was 1.78 (95% confidence interval [CI]: 1.29–2.45) and the OR of dependent self-employment for self-reported sleep disorder was 1.26 (95% CI: 1.01–1.59) compared to other paid workers.

Conclusions: Dependent self-employment is related to an increased risk of self-reported depression/anxiety and sleep disorder in South Korea.

Keywords: Dependent self-employment; Mental health problems; Korean workers; Korean working condition survey

BACKGROUND

The International Labour Office categorizes non-standard employment into 4 categories: 1) temporary employment; 2) part-time work; 3) temporary agency work and other forms of employment involving multiple parties; and 4) disguised employment relationships and dependent self-employment. Dependent self-employment refers to services that are performed for a business under a contract that is different from an employment contract. Such workers depend on one or a small number of clients for their income or receive detailed instructions regarding how the work is to be done [1]. Even though they provide labor like dependent workers, they are falsely classified as self-employed by employers in order to circumvent collective agreements, labor laws, employment taxes, and other liabilities implied in the standard contract of employment [2].

