

Peta Miller – Honours 2015

Depression, Suicide Risk and Workplace Bullying: a Comparative Study of Fly-in Fly-out (FIFO) and Residential Workers in Australia.

A spate of suicides among FIFO workers in Western Australia has led to a parliamentary inquiry, in progress at this time, into the mental health impacts of FIFO work practices in the state (Deceglie, 2014). At present, efforts are hampered by a lack of research in the area on which an appropriate response can be based. Thus calls for more empirical research have been made. Using a FIFO sample of 555 workers and a residential control group of 129 workers, it was found that depression and hopelessness (the construct measuring suicide risk) did not differ between FIFO and residential workers, but that the scores for both groups were above Australian averages. In addition, this study replicated previous research by demonstrating that bullied participants had significantly higher depression and hopelessness scores than non-bullied participants. Workplace bullying is therefore serious risk factor for depression and suicidal thoughts, intention and behaviour among FIFO workers in the resources sector of Australia.