

# **Sexual harassment 10 times more likely in casual and contract jobs**

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Women employed in casual and contract jobs are up to ten times more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those in permanent full time positions, a University of Melbourne study has found.

The research by Associate Professor Anthony LaMontagne of the McCaughey Centre, VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing will be presented at the From Margins to Mainstream Conference: 5th World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and the Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders.

Associate Professor LaMontagne's study examined the likelihood of sexual harassment in different types of employment.

Dr LaMontagne says: "The study is important new evidence because precarious employment has been associated with a variety of adverse working conditions as well as with poorer mental and physical health."

"Our study shows that 79 per cent of those who experience unwanted sexual advances at work are women," Associate Professor LaMontagne says.

"People who are employed in casual jobs are about five times more likely to be subjected to unwanted sexual advances."

"The research also shows that people in contract positions are about ten times more likely to be sexually harassed at work," Associate Professor

LaMontagne says.

Victorian Health Promotion Foundation CEO Todd Harper says: "Not only are women more likely to experience sexual harassment but females make up bigger proportions of industries which use more casual and contract labour."

"There is a strong link between sexual harassment and mental health problems. This behaviour is costly and preventable," Mr Harper says.

"This research builds on the growing evidence that the workplace is an important setting for improving health and wellbeing," Mr Harper adds.

"These findings suggest that workers in precarious employment arrangements need much greater protections from unwanted sexual advances," Associate Professor LaMontagne says.

Source: University of Melbourne

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