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**Working in later years: Voices from the older workers†**

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**Key words:** older worker, ageing workforce

**Background:** Retention of older workers forestalls the current labor shortage and eases the tension on the pension pool. However, the ageing workforce presents new challenges for government, occupational health services, employers and employees. This qualitative study is part of an international research program, a collaboration between Memorial University (Canada) and Loughborough University (UK), aims to explore the strategies to enhance productive and healthy environment for older workforce.

**Objectives:** Identify the benefits of and barriers to late life working, policy and practice promoting older workers' productivity and workability.

**Methods:** Workers, 50 years or older, recruited by poster and publicity in local media, departments of Human Resources, professional associations, were interviewed by phone or face-to-face. Recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo software. Recruitment continues until data are saturated.

**Results:** To date 63 interviews were completed, from them 15 were included in this preliminary analysis. The mean (SD) age of participants was 61.6 (9.04) years, 40% were females. 80% was involved in public services with mean length of employment 35 years. 60% found their organizations age-positive. Only 13% experienced indirect age-related discrimination. Most supported the abolishment of mandatory retirement believing that people should not be forced to retire. The benefits of working in later years included social contact, intellectual stimulation, personal enjoyment, continuation of learning, and for some, extra income. Older workers are more reliable, have extensive experiences, better work ethics. They better balance their lives now when they have less family responsibilities. Suggested changes to support older workers included flexibility, shorter work week, continuation of health insurance and worker compensation, more incentive, appreciation from their organizations. As analysis continues, new emerged themes will be added.

**Conclusion:** Working in later years is health promoting. Implications for future research, theory development and policy formulation will be discussed.

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