Session 09: New work environment

Ageing and occupational safety

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The aim of this article is to look into the possible effects of an ageing workforce on occupational safety in the Netherlands, and to use this information to draw conclusions about effective age-related staff policy. The article analyzes data on occupational accidents in the Netherlands, demographic and personal variables and work-specific characteristics from the Netherlands Working Conditions Survey 2005 by means of multivariate regression analysis. The results show that the overall rate of accidents and the rate of occupational accidents resulting in absence drops as workers become older, while the rate of occupational accidents resulting in absence of at least a month increases slightly with age. The interaction effects identified show different effects of age on the risk of accidents in certain sub-groups. The age-related drop in the risk of occupational accidents does not apply to all workers or all sectors. As young workers are most at risk of incurring an occupational accident, an increase in the number of older workers will have a positive effect on the total number of occupational accidents in the Netherlands.