

# Work overload is a recognized risk factor

We need to talk about workload and be clear about the fact that it's a risk factor. Workload can have a negative impact on the physical and mental health of workers in the health and social services system.

Workload isn't defined only by how much work there is and how much time is available to get it done. It's a complex concept affected by a number of variables including intellectual and emotional requirements, the complexity of the task, unforeseen events, and informal demands.

Workload can be experienced differently by people whose tasks are the same. Psychosocial risks are one of the reasons for this: how much support you receive from managers and colleagues, your professional autonomy, the tools available to you, and other factors.

**If you decide to challenge work overload, your local teams are trained to support and guide you. They can provide resources that will make the process easier for you.**

**Reference:**

[http://asstsas.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/documents/OP/2017/op401026d\\_sant%C3%A9psy.pdf](http://asstsas.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/documents/OP/2017/op401026d_sant%C3%A9psy.pdf)



## Psychosocial risk factors

Workload is a risk factor among others related to the organization of work, management practices, employment conditions, and social relations.

### The 6 most significant psychosocial risk factors are:

#### **1** Workload

How much work there is, and the intellectual demands and time constraints involved in doing it.

#### **2** Recognition at work

The various ways of recognizing efforts and achievements, including compensation, esteem, respect, fairness, job security, and prospects for promotion.

#### **3** Social support from immediate supervisors

Management practices that promote listening, openness to different opinions, and being available for employees.

**4****Social support from colleagues**

The group's team spirit and level of cohesion, and the help and collaboration provided by colleagues.

**5****Decision-making autonomy**

The possibility of exercising some degree of control over your work and of using or developing your abilities.

**6****Information and communication**

How management goes about informing and consulting employees about the context of the organization and management's vision.

**References:** <https://inspq.qc.ca/risques-psychosociaux-du-travail-et-promotion-de-la-sante-des-travailleurs/risques-psychosociaux-du-travail>; **see also (in English)** <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/publications/2401>

## In terms of prevention, the employer has obligations

The employer's general obligation is set out in section 51 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The employer is required to protect employees' physical and mental health by using tools and means that are designed to limit and eliminate risk.

**Reference:**

<http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cs/S-2.1>



## In its action plan on hazard prevention in the workplace and general health promotion for the 2019-2023 period, the MSSS says the employer must develop and implement a strategy to act on psychosocial risks.

As the employer goes about identifying factors that may pose a threat to psychological health, it is crucially important that an analysis of psychosocial risks be included.

**Reference:**

<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-002354/>

## Studies show that there are many benefits to taking preventive action in order to deal with psychosocial risk factors at work.

### Acting to mitigate these factors makes it possible to:

- > protect physical and mental health
- > support employee retention and attraction
- > avoid having people go on sick leave
- > improve the work climate and promote quality of life at work

**References:**

[http://asstsas.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Guides\\_Broch\\_Depl/santepsy-guide-web.pdf](http://asstsas.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Guides_Broch_Depl/santepsy-guide-web.pdf)  
<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/covid-19/formations/risques-psychosociaux-travail-pandemie>