

# *Balancing Work and Family at the Start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Evidence from the HILDA Survey*

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# *Motivation*

- Times are a changing
  - ◆ Changing attitudes to role of women in w/f = increased participation by mothers in the w/f.
  - ◆ Men expect, and are expected, to have more involvement with their children.
  - ◆ Delayed child birth.
- = increased demand for family friendly employment conditions
- But are employers listening? Aren't workers today working longer hours than ever before?



# *Key Questions?*

- Do the working time arrangements of parents match their preferences?
- How have long hours of work impacted on family life?



## *Data - The HILDA Survey*

- Funded by the Commonwealth (FaCS) but managed by the Melbourne Institute.
- Large nationally representative sample; 14,000 respondents from 7600 households.
- Mostly personal interviews.
- Conducted in 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2001.
  - ◆ It is a panel, but only data from Wave 1 are publicly available.
- Survey content emphasises: (i) work; (ii) income and (iii) family.



# *Approach*

- Looking for associations between hours of work and:
  - ◆ Working time preferences / satisfaction with hours;
  - ◆ Work–family balance and quality of intra–family relationships;
  - ◆ Subjective well–being.
- Sample restricted to employed persons aged <65 years with dependent children (<15 years).
- Distinguish b/w 4 types of households:
  - ◆ Lone parents
  - ◆ Traditional families
  - ◆ Neo–traditional families
  - ◆ Modern families



# *Working Time Indicators*

*(all working parents)*

	<35 hrs	35–40 hrs	41–48 hrs	49+ hrs
Mean weekly hours	19.3**	38.5	44.8**	58.7**
Mean preferred weekly hours	22.8**	36.8	41.9**	48.5**
Mean satisfaction with hours worked (0–10)	7.7*	7.5	7.0**	5.9**



# *Work–Family Balance Indicators*

*(all working parents)*

	<35 hrs	35–40 hrs	41–48 hrs	49+ hrs
Work–family gains	5.3	5.2	5.4	5.3
Work–family strains	2.5	2.7	3.0	2.9
Work–parenting gains	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.5
Work–parenting strains	3.5**	4.2	4.2	4.4*
Parenting stress	4.0**	3.7	3.5*	3.4**
Satisfaction w partner	8.1	8.2	8.3	8.5*
Satisfaction w children	8.8	8.6	8.7	8.7



# *Subjective Well-being Indicators*

*(all working parents)*

	<35 hrs	35–40 hrs	41–48 hrs	49+ hrs
Job satisfaction (0–10)	7.9*	7.7	7.4*	7.6
Life satisfaction (0–10)	7.9	7.8	7.8	7.9
General health (0–100)	75.1	73.8	74.1	73.3
Vitality (0–100)	60.2**	63.3	62.5	61.6
Mental health (0–100)	73.7*	75.7	76.1	76.0





# *Concluding Comments*

- Results will surprise many.
  - ◆ Don't accord with common sense.
  - ◆ Don't accord with case-study research.
  - ◆ Seem internally inconsistent.
- Are the HILDA data misleading?
- Consistent with international research.

“There is no simple relationship between time on the job and different indicators of individual-level outcomes.”  
(Barnett 1998)
- Long hours of work is a risk factor, but adverse effects only emerge when mixed with other risk factors.

