

Trends in Psychosocial Risk Exposure in Companies affiliated to Mutual de SeguridadChile (2014-2022)

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SUMMARY

The present paper outlines the trend of exposure to psychosocial risks in companies from various industrial sectors affiliated with a mutual insurance company in Chile. This report is part of a longitudinal descriptive study conducted using secondary data from 1,568,340 records collected between 2014 and 2022. The findings show a general trend indicating a decreasing exposure to psychosocial risks, particularly significant in the dimensions of "Psychological Demands" and "Social Support". However, the results in the double presence dimension remain concerning. Although the psychosocial risks surveillance protocol implemented in Chile shows positive results, there is still a relevant group of workers that needs a more targeted intervention.

KEYWORDS

Psychosocial Risks, SUSESO-ISTAS-21, Trend Analysis

Introduction

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), psychosocial risk factors are the interactions between the work environment, job content, organizational conditions, worker's capacities, needs, culture, and external personal considerations. These factors can influence health, work performance, and job satisfaction (ILO, 1984). The health and well-being of workers in Chile are increasingly influenced by psychosocial risks in the workplace (ILO, 2016). Furthermore, there is growing scientific evidence indicating that the psychosocial environment at work plays both a direct and indirect role in organizational health indexes, such as absenteeism, medical leave, accident rates, productivity, and job satisfaction (WHO, 2010).

Between 2007 and 2009, the Superintendence of Social Security (SUSESO), in collaboration with the School of Public Health of the University of Chile, the Institute of Public Health, and the Labour Directorate, validated the SUSESO/ISTAS21 Questionnaire to assess and measure psychosocial risks in the workplace. This tool is an adaptation and validation in Chile of the COPSOQ-ISTAS21 Questionnaire, which in turn is a translation and validation carried out by the Trade Union Institute for Work, Environment and Health of Barcelona (ISTAS) of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ), developed by the Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health in Denmark.

The questionnaire consists of 5 dimensions and 19 sub-dimensions in a scale of 0-100. The dimensions include: psychological demands at work, assessing the mental and emotional burden in

the workplace; Active work and skill development, reflecting worker autonomy and control, the value of their tasks, and their commitment to the organization; Social support in the company and quality of leadership, evaluating the support and guidance perceived by workers; Compensations, analysing rewards and recognition at work, as well as job insecurities and specific working conditions; Double presence, referring to the conflict between work and domestic responsibilities, especially for women.

Despite improvements in understanding these risks through the Psychosocial Risk Surveillance Protocol of the super intendency of social security (SUSESO, 2013) and the SUSESO/ISTAS-21 Questionnaire (Alvarado et al., 2012), their temporal evolution in the Chilean work context remains unknown.

Aim

To analyse the temporal trends of exposure to psychosocial risks in companies affiliated with Mutual de Seguridad in Chile from 2014 to 2022, in order to provide information that facilitates decision-making in occupational risk management. **Methodology**

A longitudinal descriptive study was conducted using secondary data from 1,568,340 records collected between 2014 and 2022 by Mutual de Seguridad. The data collection tool was the SUSESO-ISTAS-21 Questionnaire following the surveillance protocol established by the superintendency of social security of Chile. Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS 29, encompassing descriptive analysis of time series and linear regression models.

Results

The sample comprises data from workers belonging to various productive sectors, with construction (21.1%), commerce (18.6%), administrative services (11.15%), and manufacturing industry (7.99%) being the ones with higher frequencies. The sample is composed of 65.6% men and 34.4% women, predominantly distributed in the age group between 25 and 55 years (78%). The geographic distribution of the results exhibits significant variations across the country, with a higher concentration of workplaces in the central-southern region of Chile and in the Metropolitan Region, which accounts for 35.8% of the total sample.

Between 2014 and 2018, a decreasing trend is observed in the mean total scores of psychosocial risks, decreasing from 38.3 to 31.6 (-6.7 points), with a historical mean of 32.47 (SE 0.06; SD 8.04), which indicates the precision and moderate dispersion, this reflects a general tendency towards moderate exposition to risk (Figure 1),

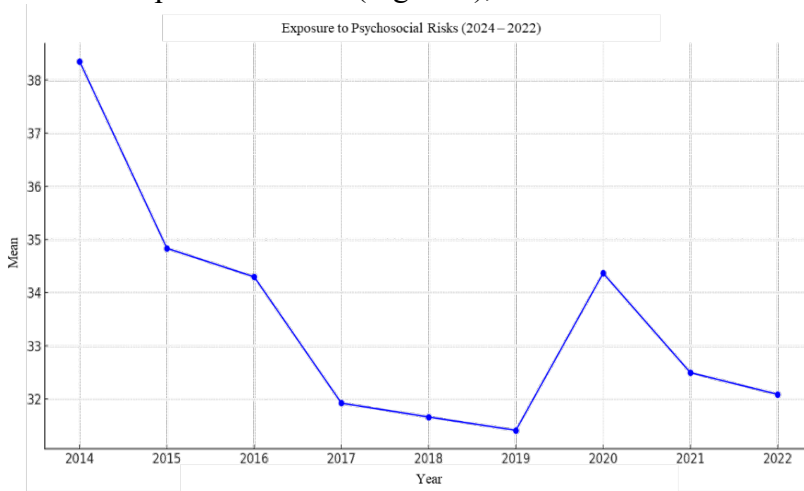


Figure 1: General exposure to Psychosocial Risks

Regarding economic activity, significant differences are observed during this time period, with the highest scores noted in public administration (mean 39.7), healthcare and social assistance activities (37.5), and education (35.3). These sectors, due to their nature, entail particular work environments, job contents, personal relationships, and organizational conditions, characterized by the responsibility of interacting with users. Conversely, the sectors of Agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fishing, Construction, and Mining and quarrying showed the lowest mean scores, with averages of 29.1, 29.7, and 29.7 respectively.

When analyzing in greater detail what occurs in each dimension, it is observed that psychological demands presented a mean of 42.6 (SD 10.15), with a temporal change in the percentage of workers at low exposure levels from 20.1% in 2014 to 62.3% in 2022. Meanwhile, medium levels vary from 78.6% in 2014 to 35.3% in 2022, and finally, high exposure levels from 1.3% in 2014 to 2.3% in 2022. The distribution of scores suggests moderate variability, with a slight tendency towards lower exposure levels, but with a concentration of data around the mean, indicating that many workers experience moderate levels of psychological demands (Figure 2).

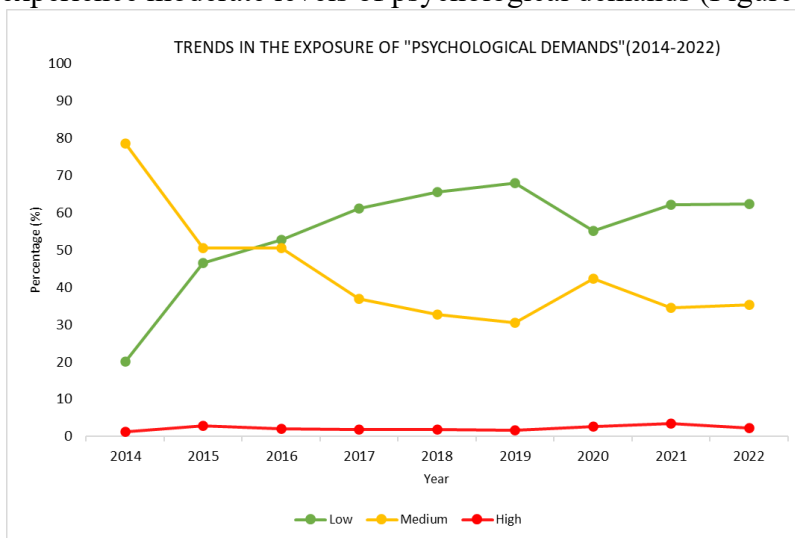


Figure 2: Trends in exposure of dimension “Psychological Demands”

Regarding the dimension of Social Support, a mean of 23.18 is observed. Historical data reveal an improvement in perceptions of social support and quality of leadership since 2014, with an increase in perceptions of "Low" exposure (3.8 in 2015 to 33.3 in 2022), a variation in the percentage of workers with medium exposures from 75.5% in 2014 to 59.5% in 2022, and a decrease in perceptions of "High" exposure from 20.4% in 2014 to 7.5% in 2022 (Figure 3).

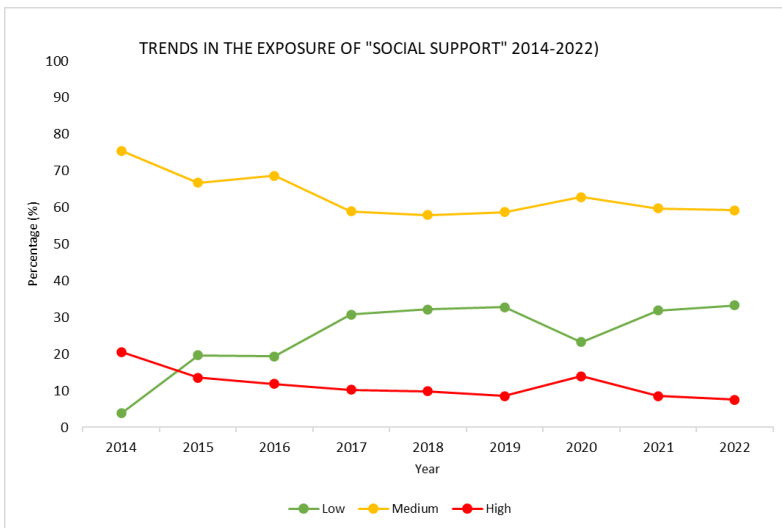


Figure 3: Trends in exposure of dimension “Social Support”

This suggests a positive trend towards better leadership and support within organizations over time, although with a temporary drop in 2020 related to COVID-19.

Particularly in the dimensions of "Psychological Demands" and "Social Support" with a significant decrease in scores obtained over the years, with coefficients of -0.723 and -0.592 respectively, and p-values less than 0.05.

However, this improvement was not uniform across all dimensions. The dimensions of "Active Work," "Compensations" and "Dual Presence" remained relatively stable without showing a significant decrease over time. The dimension of active work presents a mean of 29.1 (SD 7.9) reflecting a level of risk exposure that could be considered moderate within this dimension. When analyzing what occurred between 2014 and 2022, it is observed that in 2014, it reached its peak with a mean of 34.3 (SD 4.9), in 2022, it reaches a mean of 29.7 (SD 7.7), with a turning point in 2020 with a mean of 31.58 (SD 9.23). Changes in work dynamics, such as remote work, may have negatively influenced perceptions of control over working hours and autonomy (Figure 4).

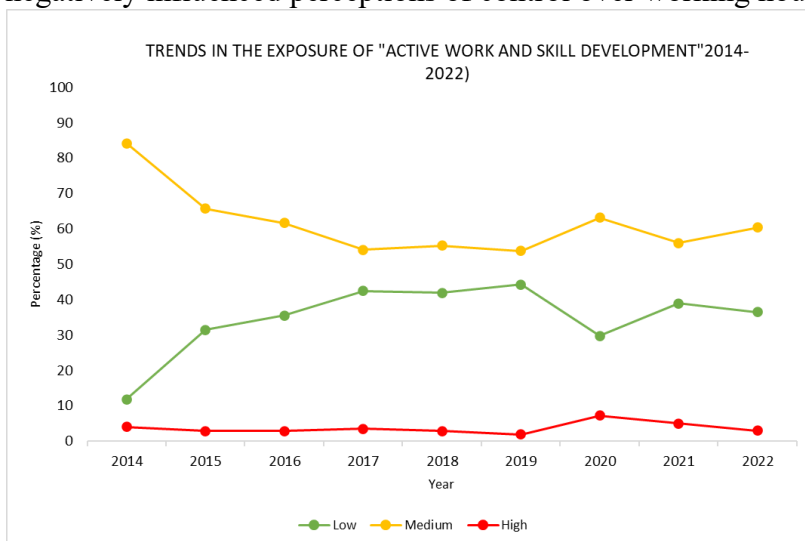


Figure 4: Trends in exposure of dimension “Active work and skill development”

On the other hand, the Compensations dimension shows a mean of 33.08 (SD 11.28), suggesting a moderate perception level of compensations by employees. Over the years, there has been an increase in perceptions of “Low” exposure from 2014 (0.2%) to 2017 (17.8%), slightly decreasing in 2022 (16.6%). Conversely, perceptions of “Medium” exposure have decreased from 2014 (79.7%) to 2022 (70.3%). Perceptions of “High” exposure, on the other hand, have shown some variability over time, with notable peaks in specific years such as 2016 (23.7%) and 2020 (33.6%) (Figure 5).

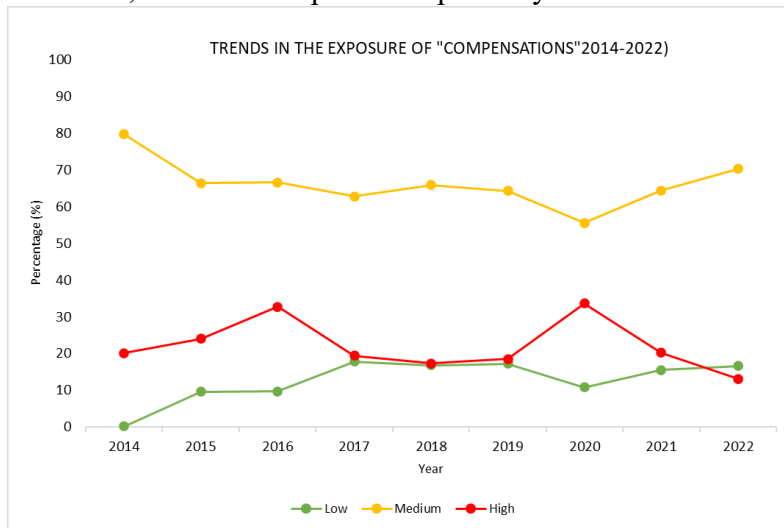


Figure 5: Trends in exposure of dimension “Compensations”

Finally, the double presence dimension presents a mean of 37.8 (SD 12.16), indicating high psychosocial risk associated with managing work and domestic responsibilities, but with high variability in the results. Over the years, it is observed that the "Double Presence" dimension has the highest frequency of "High" perceptions from 2014 (91.7%) to 2022 (61%), and although it has experienced variations, the trend has been downward, remaining above 40%. On the other hand, medium perceptions have shown fluctuations with a rising trend from 2014 (8.3%) to 2018 (42.8%). Perceptions of "Low" exposure sustained an increase from 2014 (0%) to 2019 (11.9%), decreasing again in 2022 (8.3%). "Double Presence" has been the dimension with the highest risk and most stable over time (the most resistant to change) (Figure 6).

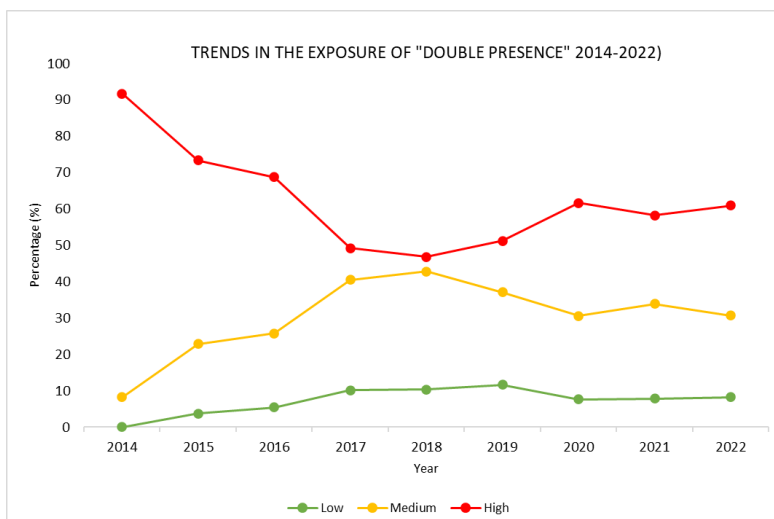


Figure 6: Trends in exposure of dimension "Double presence"

Conclusions

The study reveals improvements in exposure to psychosocial occupational risks in Chile, particularly in "Psychological Demands" and "Social Support." However, not all areas have shown improvement in the level of risks exposition; concerns persist in areas such as "Dual Presence." The year 2020, marked by the pandemic, emphasizes the importance of occupational resilience in the face of external crises. The data suggest that the psychosocial risk surveillance protocol might be yielding results, although there is an identified segment of workers who have not experienced significant changes in psychosocial risks. This group could benefit from more targeted strategies.

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