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WORK-RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN ITALY AND SPAIN

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Objectives In both Spain and Italy the number of immigrants has strongly increased in the last 20 years, currently representing more than the 10% of workforce in each country. The segregation of immigrants into unskilled or risky jobs brings negative consequences for their health. The objective of this study is to compare prevalence of work-related health problems between immigrants and native workers in Italy and Spain.

Methods Data come from the Italian Labour Force Survey (n=65 779) and Spanish Working Conditions Survey (n=11 019), both conducted in 2007. We analysed whether

interviewees, both natives and migrants, consider that their health is being affected by their work and, if so, which specific health problems (musculoskeletal diseases, respiratory problems, skin disease, hearing loss, stress, visual impairment, headache and cardiovascular diseases). For migrants, we considered those coming from countries with a low value (<0.85) on Human Development Index to rule out high-skilled professionals. Logistic regression models were used, including gender, age, and education as adjusting factors.

Results Merged Spanish/Italian analysis showed migrants were more likely to consider that their health is being compromised by work (adjusted OR 1.20, 95% CI 1.07 to 1.34). They reported more frequently musculoskeletal (1.47, 1.30 to 1.67) and respiratory problems (1.20, 1.07 to 1.34), while natives reported more frequently stress (0.65, 0.47 to 0.90) and cardiovascular diseases (0.78, 0.34 to 1.78). Separate analysis shows similar results in each country.

Conclusions This collaborative study allows for stronger evidence concerning the health of migrant workers in Southern European countries.