

## Long abstract – Monographic section

### **EXPLOITATION OF WORK, RIGHTS AND HEALTH IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY**

*Edited by Marco Omizzolo*

#### ***“You have to be careful when working”. Exploitation, health and access to healthcare for foreign workers in agriculture***

Fabio Berti and Giulia Mascagni

The article addresses the issue of prevention and access to healthcare for foreign workers employed in agriculture in Tuscany. It dwells on the consequences of labour exploitation and on the well-being of the most fragile and vulnerable migrants who do the most 'dirty, dangerous and demeaning' tasks.

After outlining the statistical-demographic framework of reference concerning the risks of injury and the health conditions of foreign workers in Tuscany, and after describing the methodological framework of the research, the article focuses on the main results that emerged, paying specific attention to three aspects: I. the risk of depletion of workers' health capital due to work-related causes, and other causes; II. health as a "private fact" of the worker and the lack of formal networks and institutions capable of timely and effective "care and cure"; III. the limits and opportunities of occupational medicine in interventions aimed at the most vulnerable migrants.

In accordance with recent evidence from the literature, this case study confirms that the most vulnerable immigrant workers are exposed to experiences of deterioration in their health on a daily basis: partly due to the high incidence of accidents, more or less serious and not always reported; partly due to their inadequate knowledge of risks and lack of awareness of rights and protections, with the very real possibility of the emergence of physical and mental disorders in the medium term.

This situation is exacerbated by the failure of the health system to care for these fragile workers: their only contact with a health professional turns out to be with an occupational physician, except in the case of more serious incidents, including those related to mental disorders, when the emergency room is used inappropriately.

While waiting for a redefinition of the relationship with primary care medicine on the part of foreign workers – primarily asylum seekers and thus beneficiaries of international protection – the occupational physician, even more than the emergency physician, could therefore play an important role with regard to what is provided for by law in protecting health, the health of all.

**Key words:** Foreign workers, health, agriculture, exploitation, safety at work, Tuscany.

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