WELFARE e ERGONOMIA
Anno XII - 2/2026

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**Call for Papers Welfare e Ergonomia 2/2026**

***Lavoro e salute mentale***

*edited by Francesca Coin e Luca Negrogno*

In recent years, the relationship between work and mental health has become a central theme in the public debate, marked by the spread of work-related stress disorders such as anxiety, depression, burnout, emotional exhaustion. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), about 12 billion workdays are lost every year due to anxiety and depression. EU-OSHA estimates that 27% of European workers suffer from work-related stress. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has included mental health among the key goals of the 2030 agenda for decent work. The Council of the EU, in turn, has highlighted how mental health is affected by the negative impact of precariousness, which contributes to undermining the worker's psychophysical well-being. Clearly, the transformations of contemporary work have deteriorated the psychophysical health of those who work, generating an increasingly widespread social distress. Despite this, research on mental health in workplaces is limited, as is the regulatory framework, which presents delays and bureaucratic complexities, as a consequence of a poor integration between research activities and protection and prevention tools.

This Special Issue aims to investigate the relationship between work and mental health in different work contexts. Recently, studies by Inail (2024) and Istat (2020) have highlighted the increase in burnout in the social-health, school and logistics sectors, as well as the growth of distress in poor and informal sectors, characterised by precariousness, scarce possibility of controlling work processes, exposure to conflictual dynamics within workplaces. In general, a long scientific production has highlighted how the evolution in the organisation of work, which combines insecure and vulnerable contractual forms with increasingly invasive forms of control, has exacerbated psychic suffering in workplaces. This, therefore, should not be interpreted only as a clinical fact, but rather as a product of organisational modalities that are increasingly stringent, deriving from procedural forms often rigid and coercive.

The tradition of Italian critical psychiatry, which has seen in Franco Basaglia and Franca Ongaro Basaglia the points of reference of a broad theoretical and practical movement, has played a central role in connecting the reflection on mental health to the role of the productive norm, showing how work (or its absence) is a crucial element in the experience of individuals' illness. Subsequently, Richard Warner (1991) confirmed the circular relationship between the spread of psychiatric diagnoses, unemployment rates, the dominant models in practice and in the discipline. Today, the historical reflection of the anti-institutional movement has particularly influenced the critical analysis of working conditions in health, social, social-health, educational, school and penal services. This is a particularly dense and complex field of research, in which workers are affected by the need to mediate between weak and fragmented organisational cultures (Olivetti Manoukian, 2015), between value principles and corporate objectives, within increasingly complex forms of managerialisation.

In fact, a plurality of theoretical and disciplinary approaches converge in affirming that the organisation of work is not neutral but constitutes a decisive determinant of well-being and psychic suffering, confronting those who work with value-based and productive pressures that often require increasingly efficient performances while coexisting with acute forms of economic and contractual vulnerability. In this context, the potential problems are multiple. The social epidemiology of work, developed between the United States and Scandinavia starting in the 1970s, for example, has emphasised the issue of control. For Robert Karasek (1979),

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distress does not depend so much on the intensity of the workload as on the suffering that derives from poor decision-making autonomy. The issue of autonomy has also been highlighted by Michael Marmot (1991; 2004), who showed how the inability to control work is a crucial predictor of distress, contributing to the definition of the Social Determinants of Health (SDH) paradigm, formalised by the World Health Organization's Commission in 2008. For Christophe Dejours, founder of the psychodynamics of work, psychic suffering derives from the transformation of organisational logics of work, increasingly oriented towards the evaluation of individual performance, the erosion of solidarity among workers and competition. Christina Maslach (1982), in turn, examined the outcome of these dynamics in the care sector, showing how they lead to situations of burnout, a syndrome composed of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal efficacy, providing measurement tools that paved the way for the birth of occupational health psychology (OHP).

If, in the past, these perspectives appeared distant, the crises of recent years have made increasingly evident the need for dialogue, showing that mental health in the world of work, as a social and political problem of global scope, must be considered in close relation with the ways in which work is organised.

The purpose of this CfP is to investigate the relationship between the social and economic organisation of work and psychological and occupational health. Contributions based on qualitative approaches (ethnographies, case studies, interviews), quantitative approaches (surveys, longitudinal analysis, social epidemiology), conducted in different work sectors (from catering to agriculture, from commerce to industry, from research work to care work, from social-health and educational services to the penal sector, from consulting to management; from digital work to domestic work) are welcome.

**Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:**

- Forms of distress emerging in different work contexts, or in areas characterised by a lack of work and social opportunities;
- Effects of contractual fragility on mental health, with attention to precariousness and economic poverty.
- Effects on mental health of new forms of control and digital surveillance in hybrid or remote work, among platform workers, data workers or in intellectual work;

- Intersectional analyses of the effects of inequalities on mental health;
- Impact on mental health of algorithmic management and performance evaluation;
- Studies on regulations, public and trade-union initiatives for the management of psychosocial risks and the promotion of mental health at work; experiences of involvement of social partners and bottom-up practices of therapy and care.

Potential Authors of this issue of Welfare & Ergonomia are invited to submit by January **31, 2026** an abstract of about **3000 characters**. If accepted, by **July 15, 2026** the full contribution, according to the following subdivision:

- theoretical contributions (subject to peer review) of no more than **25,000 characters** (spaces included).
- empirical research (subject to peer review) of no more than **25,000 characters** (spaces included).

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For evaluation purposes, the abstract must be structured as follows:

- introduction to the topic addressed;
- scientific framework in which the contribution is situated, reconstruction of the national and international debate;
- methodological approach adopted and hypotheses formulated;
- most important and innovative results;
- essential bibliographic references.

***E-mail addresses to which abstracts should be sent:***

welfarergonomia.rel@irpps.cnr.it

After communication of acceptance of the proposals by the issue editors, online registration of Authors at the webpage of the OJS platform of the publisher Franco Angeli will be necessary: https://ojs.francoangeli.it/_ojs/index.php/we/user/register

Once registration is completed, Authors can upload the article by clicking on the "Make a new submission" link available in the Dashboard. Should the proposed essay not be relevant to the themes of the Journal, communication will be sent to the proponents.

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