

# **Mental health and employment transitions: a slippery slope**

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# Overview

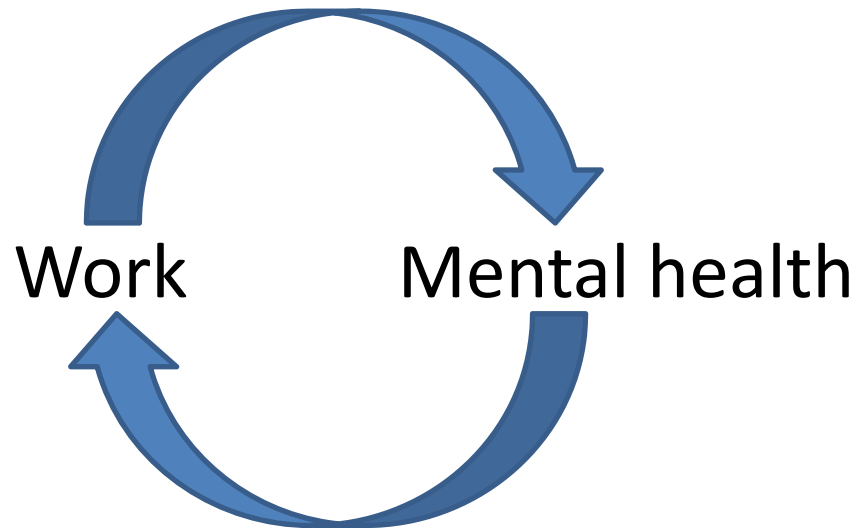
- Mental health status is associated with labour market outcomes.
- It is unclear whether people with poor mental health stay in temporary employment or take a further step down the employment ladder.
- This paper reveals:
  - women with poor mental health descend into unemployment
  - men with poor mental health sink into inactivity

# Background

- **1 / 12 people will experience poor mental health** at some point
- **Social exclusion** is a component of the experience of mental illness and the consequences can be significant, not least in terms of **economic disadvantage** and **poverty** (Sartorius and Schulze, 2005).
- Grove *et al.* (2005) contend that this high propensity to be in poverty is because poor mental health is associated with **low levels of employment**
- Poor mental health restricts social lives and retains **over 1.5 million** people of working age in economic inactivity in the UK (Black, 2009).
- This has **remained constant** over the preceding 20 years despite significant legislative changes (Beresford, 1996; Sayce, 1998).

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- The dominant (medical and epidemiological) literatures highlight that transitioning out of work ***has a significant impact on*** mental health (Thomas *et al.*, 2005).



- Dawson *et al.* (2015, p.50) find that “permanent employees who will be in temporary employment in the future have poorer mental health than those who never become temporarily employed.”

# Data

- British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)
- National representative panel survey of ~10,000 individuals in ~5,500 households
- 1991 – 2008/9
- Our sample:
  - working age people only (16-59 women, 16-64 men)
  - 9,084 individuals and 75,443 person-year obs.
  - 4,400 men (35,911 obs.) & 4,684 women (39,532 obs.)

# Labour market status variable

- 1) in full-time, permanent employment
- 2) in part-time, permanent employment
- 3) In temporary employment
- 4) self-employed
- 5) unemployed
- 6) inactive

For each individual & year observed

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**Men, no mental health condition ( $N = 34,254$ )**

**Future Status**

		<b>Temp</b>	<b>PT- Perm</b>	<b>FT- Perm</b>	<b>Self- emp</b>	<b>Unemp</b>	<b>Inactive</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Temp</b>	<i>N</i>	<b>248</b>	38	422	58	96	94	956
	%	<b>25.94</b>	3.97	44.14	6.07	10.04	9.83	100
<b>PT-Perm</b>	<i>N</i>	23	<b>313</b>	185	19	20	52	612
	%	3.76	<b>51.14</b>	30.23	3.1	3.27	8.5	100
<b>FT-Perm</b>	<i>N</i>	294	163	<b>20,591</b>	401	358	365	22,172
	%	1.33	0.74	<b>92.87</b>	1.81	1.61	1.65	100
<b>Self-emp</b>	<i>N</i>	63	22	312	<b>4,132</b>	67	88	4,684
	%	1.35	0.47	6.66	<b>88.22</b>	1.43	1.88	100
<b>Unemp</b>	<i>N</i>	123	50	351	105	<b>768</b>	269	1,666
	%	7.38	3	21.07	6.3	<b>46.1</b>	16.15	100
<b>Inactive</b>	<i>N</i>	148	76	270	81	242	<b>3,347</b>	4,164
	%	3.55	1.83	6.48	1.95	5.81	<b>80.38</b>	100

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	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Age	40.16	38.31
Mental health condition	0.05	0.10
Degree	0.16	0.14
Further education	0.32	0.28
A-levels	0.15	0.13
O-levels	0.16	0.22
Other qualifications	0.07	0.09
No qualifications	0.13	0.15
<i>Past experience</i>		
Past temp employment	0.05	0.07
Past PT-permanent	0.02	0.28
Past FT-permanent	0.68	0.43
Past self-employment	0.15	0.05
Past unemployment	0.08	0.05
Past inactivity	0.17	0.35
Observations	35,911	39,532

**Sample means by gender**  
Source: BHPS 1991-2008



# Mental health variable

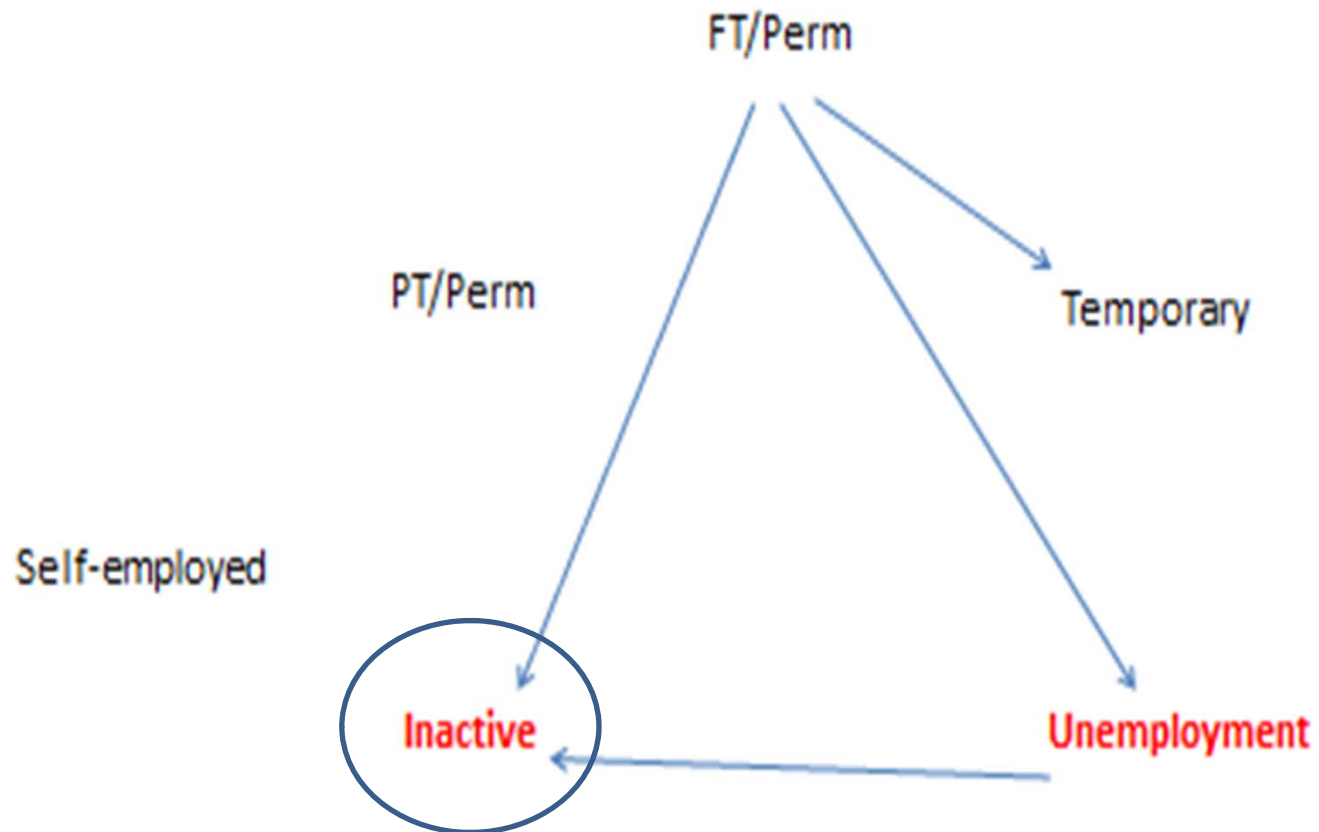
- Mental health condition derived from the BHPS question:

*“Do you have any of the health problems or disabilities listed on this card...”*

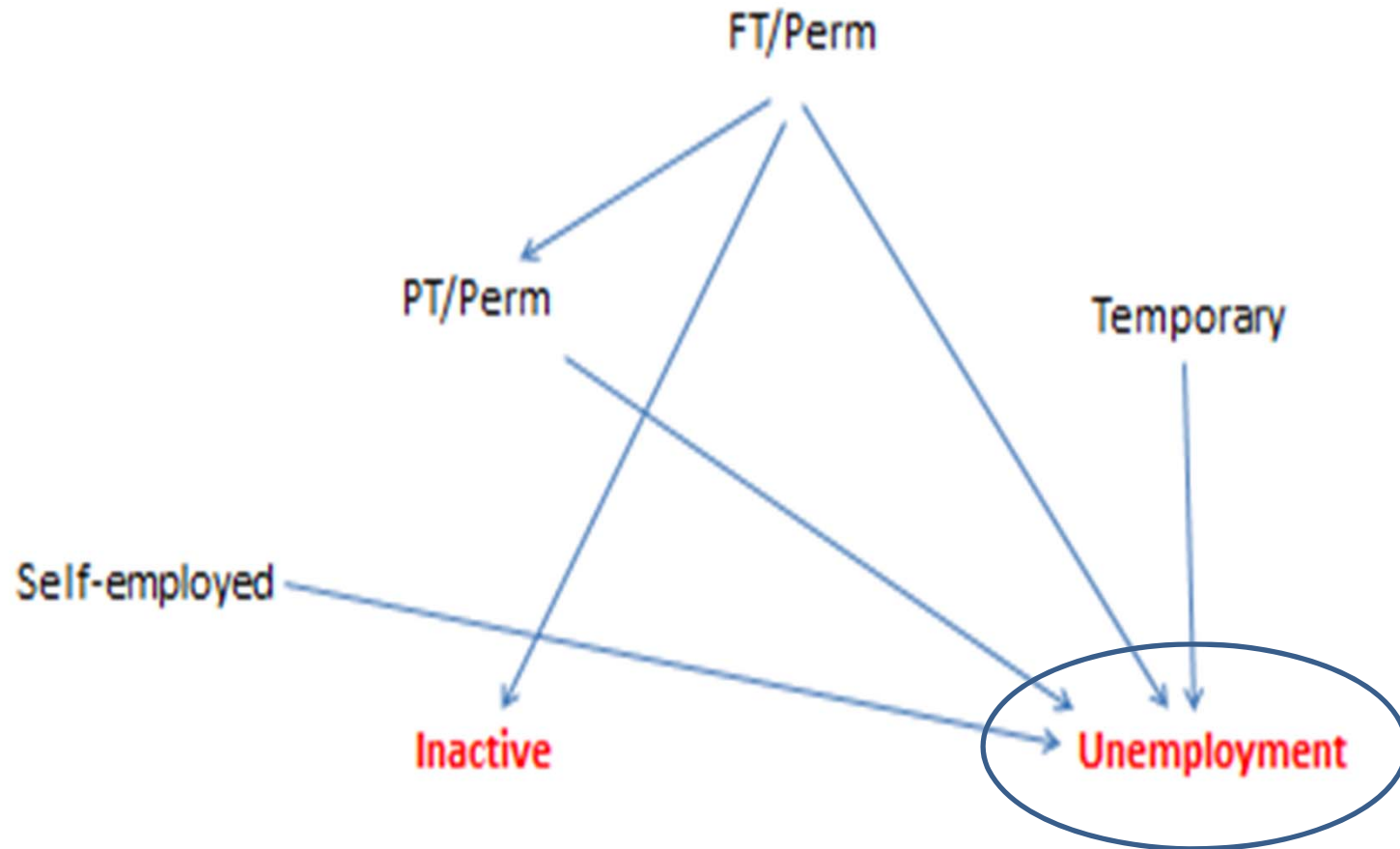
- Range of possible answers.
- We created a mental health condition variable with
  - 1 (one) if individual indicates having *“Anxiety, depression or psychiatric problems”*
  - 0 (zero) otherwise.

# Multinomial logit results indicate:

Males



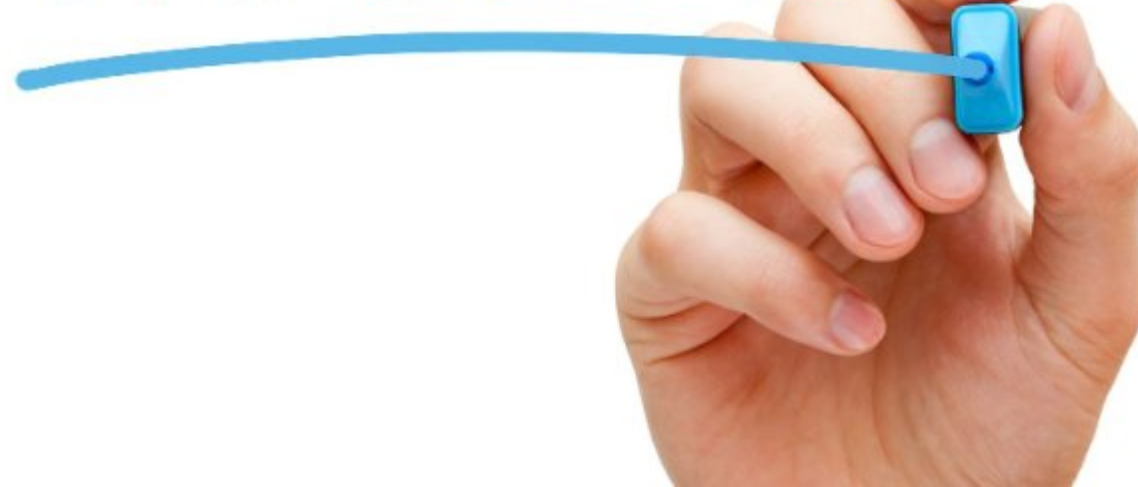
Females



# Conclusions

- This paper reveals:
  - women with poor mental health descend into unemployment
  - men with poor mental health sink into inactivity
- More attention needs to be focused on **supporting people in work** rather than catching them as they slide into ever more precarious employment.

THANK YOU



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