



## *Presenteeism at Work*

Coming to work sick may do more harm than staying home – for the employee, the team, and the firm. Whilst the cost of absenteeism in organizations has been widely acknowledged and extensively examined, the counter-issue of ‘presenteeism’ has only recently attracted scholarly attention as a phenomenon that harms employee wellbeing, disrupts team dynamism, and damages productivity. This volume brings together leading international scholars from diverse scientific backgrounds, including occupational psychology, health, and medicine, to provide a pioneering review of the subject. International in scope, the collection incorporates both Western and East Asian perspectives, making it an informative resource for multinational companies seeking to formulate human resource strategies and better manage their culturally diverse workforce. It will also appeal to scholars and graduate students researching human resource management, organization studies, organizational health, and organizational psychology.

CARY L. COOPER is 50th Anniversary Professor of Organizational Psychology and Health at Manchester Business School. He is the author/ editor of over 160 books, including the *Downsizing: Is Less Still More?* (Cambridge, 2012) and *Building More Effective Organizations* (Cambridge, 2007), as well as over 100 book chapters. He has written over 400 scholarly articles for academic journals, and is a frequent contributor to national newspapers, TV, and radio. He is currently Founding Editor of the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* and Co-editor of the *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness*, and President of the British Academy of Management and the CIPD.

LUO LU is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Business Administration, National Taiwan University, Taiwan. She has been awarded the Distinguished Research Award by the Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan. She has published more than 180 papers in referred journals and is the series editor, author, and co-author of more than 20 books and book chapters.

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# Presenteeism at Work

*Edited by*

CARY L. COOPER

*University of Manchester*

LUO LU

*National Taiwan University*



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## Contributors

### **Gunnar Aronsson, PhD**

Department of Psychology, Stockholm University

GUNNAR ARONSSON is a professor of work and organizational psychology in the Department of Psychology, Stockholm University. His main research area is work organization, stress, and health. He has published a large number of scientific articles on work, stress, recovery, health, sickness presenteeism and absenteeism. He is coauthor of the book *Work Without Boundaries – Psychological Perspectives on the New Working Life* (Wiley-Blackwell 2011). Recently he has participated in two large systematic reviews and meta-analyses on Work environment and depressive symptoms (2015) and on Work environment and burnout symptoms (2017), both published in *BMC Public health*.

### **Caroline Biron, PhD**

Management Department, Laval University

CAROLINE BIRON is an associate professor of occupational health and safety management at Laval University, Quebec, Canada. She earned a Master's degree in psychology from Laval University and a PhD from Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom. She is actively involved in several organizations to support and evaluate implementation of interventions to reduce stress, improve well-being, and organizational performance.

### **Petri Böckerman, PhD**

Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics, Labour  
Institute for Economic Research and IZA

PETRI BÖCKERMAN is a professor of health economics at Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics. He received his doctoral degree in economics in 2003, having been researcher at the Labour Institute for Economic Research since 1996. Böckerman is a Research

Fellow of the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), scientific advisor to Yrjö Jahnsson Foundation, and Docent (Adjunct Professor) of the University of Tampere. His research interests are at the intersection of empirical health and labour economics. Böckerman's research has been published in journals such as *ILR Review*, *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, and *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)*, among others.

**Chih-Chieh Chen, PhD**

Western Business School, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics

CHIH-CHIEH CHEN, PhD, is an associate professor of human resource management in the Western Business School, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, China. He earned his PhD from Cardiff University, UK. Previously, he worked at Academia Sinica, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology and National Chung-Hsing University, Taiwan. His research interests include human resource management, cross-cultural management and business sustainability.

**Cary L. Cooper, PhD**

Manchester Business School, University of Manchester

CARY L. COOPER, PhD, is the 50th Anniversary Professor of Organizational Psychology and Health at Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester. He is President of the British Academy of Management, Outgoing President of RELATE, President of the Institute of Welfare Officers, and immediate Past Chair of the Academy of Social Sciences. He has published many books and scholarly articles in the areas of occupational psychology, workplace stress and well-being, and work–life balance. He was knighted by the Queen in 2014 for his contribution to the social sciences.

**Hsueh-Liang Fan, PhD**

Department of Business Administration, Soochow University

HSUEH-LIANG FAN is an assistant professor in the Department of Business Administration at Soochow University, Taiwan. He received his doctoral degree from the Graduate Institute of Technology, Innovation and Intellectual Property Management, National Chengchi University. His research interests include innovation

management, creativity, and innovation on both individual and team levels. His papers have appeared in the *Creativity Research Journal*, the *Journal of Creative Behavior*, and *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, among others.

**Aristides I. Ferreira, PhD**

Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), Business Research Unit (BRU-IUL)

ARISTIDES I. FERREIRA is an assistant professor at ISCTE-IUL, Portugal, where he is Director of the Master program in Human Resource Management and Organizational Consulting. He is also a researcher at the Business Research Unit in the same institute. He received his PhD in Psychology from the University of Minho, Portugal. His research interests include presenteeism, leadership, and creativity. His research work has appeared in journals such as *International Journal of Project Management*, *Journal of Business Research*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, and *Stress and Health*.

**Patricia Fosh, PhD**

China Centre (Maritime), Southampton Solent University

PATRICIA FOSH, PhD, is an Honourable Research Fellow in the China Centre (Maritime), Southampton Solent University. She earned her PhD from the University of Cambridge. Previously, she was Professor at London School of Economics and Politics, and she has also held academic positions at Bristol University, Cardiff University and Imperial College. Her research interests include human resource management in China, employment law and industrial relationships.

**Pierre-Sébastien Fournier, PhD**

Management Department, Laval University

PIERRE-SÉBASTIEN FOURNIER is a full professor and chair of the department of management at Laval University. His research interests focus on intergenerational transmission of knowledge, workload, and psychosocial risk. He has contributed to numerous scientific journals, books, and international conferences.

**Eric Gosselin, PhD**

Department of Industrial Relations, University of Quebec in Outaouais

ERIC GOSSELIN, PhD, is a full professor of work and organizational psychology at the Department of Industrial Relations at the University of Quebec in Outaouais. He is also a member of the Laboratory of

Psychoneuroendocrinological Analysis of Stress and Health (LAPS<sup>2</sup>), where he conducts studies on the relation between stress and job performance. He completed a PhD in industrial relations at the University of Montréal as well as a postdoctorate at the University of Ottawa's School of Psychology. His research interests involve psychological health and stress management, assiduity at work, career management, and the dynamics underlying conflict episodes.

**Gary Johns, PhD**

Concordia University, Montreal and University of British Columbia  
GARY JOHNS is Professor Emeritus of Management in the John Molson School of Business, Concordia University, Montreal, and Adjunct Professor in the Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia. He has research interests in absenteeism, presenteeism, personality, work design, research methodology, and the impact of context on organizational behavior. He has published in *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *Journal of Management*, *Personnel Psychology*, and *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*.

**Shu-Fang Kao, PhD**

Department of Applied Psychology, Hsuan Chuang University, Taiwan  
SHU-FANG KAO, PhD, National Taiwan University, Taiwan, is currently a professor in the Department of Applied Psychology, Hsuan Chuang University, Taiwan. Professor Kao's research interests are: indigenous psychology, stress and adjustment, positive psychology, and other personality/social psychological topics. Professor Kao has published extensively in referred journals and is the author of several books.

**Maria Karanika-Murray, MSc, PhD**

Department of Psychology, Nottingham Trent University  
MARIA KARANIKA-MURRAY is a work psychologist and Associate Professor at Nottingham Trent University. Her research seeks to understand how workplaces that enable healthy and productive work can be developed, with a focus on workplace design, intervention evaluation, presenteeism, and older workers. Her work has been funded by the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work, Great Britain's Health & Safety Executive, the UK Economic & Social Research Council, Heart Research UK, and the European Commission.

**Mouna Knani, PhD candidate**

Management Department, Laval University

MOUNA KNANI completed her doctoral thesis at Laval University, Canada. Her main research interests center on burnout, presenteeism, well-being at work, and psychosocial risks. She has received doctoral scholarships from the Fonds de Recherche du Québec – Société et Culture (FRQSC) and the Institut de Recherche en Santé et en Sécurité du Travail (IRSST). She has contributed to several scientific journals and international conferences.

**Cong Liu, PhD**

Professor, Hofstra University

CONG LIU, PhD, is a professor at Hofstra University. Her major research interests focus on occupational health psychology, which concerns the application of psychology to improving the quality of work life and to protecting the safety, health, and well-being of workers. She has done cross-cultural/cross-national studies examining Chinese and American employees' job stress experiences, such as conflict with a supervisor, conflict with a coworker, workplace ostracism, organizational constraints, and challenge and hindrance stressors.

**Luo Lu, DPhil**

Department of Business Administration, National Taiwan University, Taiwan

LUO LU, DPhil, University of Oxford, UK, is currently the Distinguished Professor in the Department of Business Administration, National Taiwan University, Taiwan. Her major research interests are: culture and self, subjective well-being, stress and adjustment, work stress and organizational health, and other personality/social/IO psychological topics. She has been awarded the Distinguished Research Award by the Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan. She has published more than 180 papers in referred journals and is the series editor, author, and coauthor of more than 20 books and book chapters. She has served on several editorial boards as either an editor/associate editor or a board member.

**Jie Ma, MBA**

Hofstra University

JIE MA is currently a doctoral student in applied organizational psychology at Hofstra University, while working as an adjunct

professor in the Department of Psychology. His major research interests place emphasis on occupational health psychology and positive organizational psychology, with specific focus on the connections between challenge/hindrane demands and engagement, and how employees can survive and thrive out of these demands. He is also interested in interpersonal dynamics in the workplace, such as workplace conflict and interpersonal empowerment.

**Staffan Marklund, PhD**

Division of Insurance Medicine, Department of Clinical Neuroscience, Karolinska Institute

STAFFAN MARKLUND is a professor of work and health at the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden. He finished his doctoral degree in sociology at Umeå University in 1975. He was a visiting research fellow at Harvard University, USA in 1983, at the University of New South Wales, Australia in 1986–7 and a visiting professor at York University, Canada in 1991–2. He was a professor at the National Institute for Working Life between 1999 and 2007. His main research has been on social welfare, sickness absence, and occupational health.

**Luis F. Martinez, PhD**

Nova School of Business and Economics – Universidade Nova de Lisboa

LUIS F. MARTINEZ is an assistant professor at Nova School of Business and Economics – Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and holds a PhD in Social and Behavioral Sciences from Tilburg University. He held a Visiting Scholar position at the MIT Sloan School of Management. His research interests include emotion and decision-making, consumer behavior and health at work. His research work has appeared in journals such as *Decision*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Cognition and Emotion*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, and *Stress and Health*.

**Daniel P. Meltzer, PhD**

Hofstra University

DANIEL P. MELTZER, is a Special Assistant Professor of Psychology at Hofstra University. His research interests include factors that influence work motivation, as well as how employees can reduce and recover from work stress.

**Mariella Miraglia, PhD**

University of Liverpool Management School

MARIELLA MIRAGLIA is a lecturer in organizational behavior and human resource management at the University of Liverpool Management School. Her main research interests lie in the field of organizational behaviors, human resource management, and occupational health psychology, with a special focus on absenteeism and presenteeism, performance appraisal and management, job crafting, and self-efficacy. She has published in *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *Human Resource Management*, and *Human Relations*.

**Tânia A. M. Nunes, MSc**

L'Oréal, Portugal

TÂNIA A. M. NUNES is a human resources trainee at L'Oréal Portugal, giving support to different areas such as learning for development, HR communications and employer branding. She holds a Bachelor degree in psychological sciences from the University of Coimbra and a Master degree in social and organizational psychology from ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.

**Yanxia Wang, PhD**

School of Management, Lanzhou University

YANXIA WANG, PhD, finished her postdoctoral research program in Audencia Business School in France. She also graduated from Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, China. She studied as a visiting scholar in the University at Albany, State University of New York. Her research interests include organizational health, industrial organizational psychology, and corporate social responsibility.

**Liu-Qin Yang, PhD**

Portland State University

LIU-QIN YANG is an associate professor of psychology at Portland State University. She received her PhD in industrial and organizational psychology from the University of South Florida. Her research interests include occupational stress, motivation, workplace mistreatment, and quantitative methodologies. Recently, she has been working on projects focused on the role of affective shift in influencing worker motivation and productivity, interventions to prevent workplace mistreatment toward healthcare workers, and reliability issues in experience sampling research.

## Foreword

The *Cambridge Companions to Management* series is pleased to bring Cary Cooper and Luo Lu's path-breaking *Presenteeism at Work* to your attention. Presenteeism is the appearance of working but not working: something that is an increasing concern, not only for workers and their organizations, but for their societies. The combination of cost pressures from globalization and information technology means that more people than ever before do not have the luxury of staying away from work and resting when they become ill. For example, fully one out of every five jobs in the United States is held by a worker under contract – meaning no sick pay (National Public Radio/Marist poll). That means that every day not working results in no income for the worker on that day, so millions of people continue to work even when their health is impaired. This is heart-wrenching for those who must work under these circumstances, but it is also costly to organizations, which are not getting the work for which they are paying, and for societies, because it spreads disease and contributes to higher health care expenses as people push themselves and so become more gravely ill. Yet, presenteeism is not just a phenomenon of increased work insecurity. As Aronsson and Markland demonstrate in Chapter 6, presenteeism is a problem even in countries with extensive social supports for workers, such as Sweden. Further, as this volume demonstrates, there are cultural pressures as well: in Chapter 3, Lu and Kao report how the cultural pressures in Confucian societies foster presenteeism despite years of national and organizational policy interventions designed to limit it.

This is a book of both breadth and depth. Cooper and Lu have gathered scholars from a wide variety of disciplines and countries together to help us understand what the causes and consequences of presenteeism are. Scholars in medicine, psychology, economics, and business from Europe, Asia, and North America bring their diverse perspectives and understandings of the different contexts to enrich our understanding of presenteeism. For example, in Chapter 4, Ma,

Meltzer, Yang, and Liu document the work contexts, personal circumstances, personality traits, and motives leading to presenteeism. Chapter 8, by Miraglia and Johns, presents compelling evidence that presenteeism leads to emotional exhaustion, burnout, mental ill-health, physical ill-health, and job dissatisfaction. Further, this is the first work to move significantly beyond the study of presenteeism as an individual phenomenon with consequences for the individual and the organization to consider larger questions of team performance, organization strategy, and societal well-being.

This innovative, international, and cross-disciplinary perspective on a relatively new and increasingly important subject is a good example of why the Companions series exists. Enjoy.

Series Editor  
Jone L. Pearce  
University of California, Irvine