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Recent Research Abstracts

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WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS

McKinnish, Terra G. (2004). Occupation, Sex-Integration and Divorce. *American Economic Review*, Vol 94(2), 322-325.

In the past 30 years, labour force participation of women has increased, and occupational segregation of women and men has decreased. "These two trends have combined to generate a substantial increase in the amount of workplace contact between men and women. This paper investigates whether there is evidence that increased interaction of men and women in the workplace increases the probability of divorce among married workers. Individuals may find potential spouses at work, and secondly, workplace contact may lead to extramarital affairs that disrupt the marriage even if the liaison does not lead to a long-term relationship or marriage. Third, the fact that individuals meet many members of the opposite sex can change their perceptions of their outside alternatives and make them less satisfied with their current partners. The median woman works in an occupation that is 74% female, and the median man works in an occupation that is 26% female, but about a quarter of women work in occupations that are at least 50% male, and a quarter of men work in occupations that are at least 40% female. Regressions results show that "for women, working in occupations with a higher fraction female lowers the probability of divorce. For men, working in an occupation with a higher fraction female raises the probability of divorce.

Powell, Gary N. (2001). Workplace romance between senior-level executives and lower-level employees: an issue of work disruption and gender. *Human Relations*, 54(11), 1519-1544.

Co-workers' reactions to a hierarchical workplace romance between an older, married senior-level executive and a younger, single lower-level employee were examined. Consistent with gender stereotypes about hierarchical workplace romances, respondents were more likely to attribute a job motive to a female lower-level employee than to a male lower-level employee. In turn, consistent with a work-disruption perspective, respondents regarded the relationship as representing a more serious problem for the organization when they believed that the lower-level participant was motivated by job concerns. Further, when respondents believed that the relationship represented a more serious problem for the organization, they preferred that management direct stronger action against both participants and would take stronger action themselves. These results suggest that hierarchical workplace romances represent an issue of both work disruption and gender.

Gregg, Robert E. (2004). Restrictions on workplace romance and consensual relationship policies. *Journal of Medical Practice Management*, 19(6), 314-6.

The workplace is frequently the site of romantic and consensual relationships. These relations may sometimes be deemed by employers to infringe on the proper conduct of business and prompt them to adopt rules that limit such interactions. This article explores some of the rights of employees and the possible policies that employers may realistically adopt within the confines of federal and state constitutional statutes, in light of court precedent and in keeping with possible union contracts.