# Chapter 9 Effort-Reward Imbalance Model

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# Abstract

The effort-reward imbalance model was developed to identify health-adverse effects of stressful psychosocial work and employment conditions in developed and rapidly developing countries. It posits that exposure to the recurrent experience of failed reciprocity at work “high cost/low gain” increases the risk of incident stress-related disorders, such as depression or coronary heart disease. Evidence from prospective epidemiological investigations, as well as from experimental and naturalistic studies focusing on psychobiological mechanisms, supports this notion. Distinct measures of prevention can be derived from available scientific knowledge, addressing the organizational level as well as the level of national labor and social policies. Recent extensions of the model beyond the context of paid work highlight the far-reaching importance of fair procedures of social exchange for human health and well-being.