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## Different shades of green: an analysis of the occupational health and safety risks faced by wind farm workers

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The work activity in the wind power sector and its psychosocial risks are at the centre of our analysis. The growth of this sector has been marked by environmental, economic, and political drivers. Its starring role is also visible by the emergence of the so-called “green jobs”. Notwithstanding, the evolution of this sector ought not to compromise issues related to working conditions and occupational risks.

Following a request addressed by a leading company in the Portuguese market, to assess the psychosocial risk factors in the operation and maintenance of onshore wind turbines, an action-research project was developed.

An “activity diary” was designed to describe the tasks performed, critical situations in terms of occupational risks, and the perceived impacts on health, throughout a working week (n = 6). These data were then complemented with guided analyses of work activity, supported with the dialogue with the workers at the wind farms; collective interviews with the workers (n = 17); and three focus-group sessions, two sessions with the team leaders (n = 5); and one session with the workers (n = 8).

Our findings showed the coexistence of risks and impacts on health that are specific to this sector: working under adverse weather conditions; working at height across the life of a turbine and in spaces of reduced mobility; staying long work hours inside of the nacelles so as to meet an optimum balance between favourable wind slots to intervene and avoiding to go up and down across additional times, in the case of turbines without lifts (70m - 120m); and a feeling of early ageing (e.g., knee pains related to extensive ladder climbing several times a day).

The wind farm workers have set up a process with the aim to gain recognition of this profession as being a “rapidly worn-out profession”. It is, therefore, a key moment to discuss what the activity analysis reveals, so as to guarantee the preservation of conditions for future generations of workers.