



## Barriers to Return-to-Work in a Context of Social Vulnerability

### Keynote Speaker

#### Dr. Stephanie Premji

Assistant Professor, McMaster University



Issues such as precarious employment, or being a non-white worker, are not solely a matter of business, economics or even social justice; they are also health issues. Stephanie Premji researches how employment issues affect health.

Some such issues are as mundane as daily commutes – more and more people work multiple jobs in different locations, and spent large parts of their days (and nights) in transit. Spending three to six hours traveling each day can create sleeplessness, anxiety, depression, and social and behavioural problems for workers, and also for their children.

Premji's work relies on having the infrastructure in place to reach historically marginalized groups, and provide them with information and interpretation in languages and formats that encourage them to participate in research. For Premji, this means working with community partners – not just to find translators and study participants, but also to shape the research itself, and to feed the results back into those communities.

In her teaching, Premji finds many of her students turn out to be second-generation Canadians whose parents have experienced first-hand de-skilling and precarious employment. She appreciates how students feel connected to her field of expertise, and trusts that as they increase their understanding of these issues, they will be better positioned to affect them.

### Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction
- Keynote Presentation
- Injured Worker Presentations
- Panel Commentary
- General Discussion
- Closing Comments

**NB: This event is scent free**

The event is free, with a suggested donation of \$10 for waged attendees. Tokens are available for the unwaged. Refreshments will be served. RSVP appreciated but not necessary: [BancroftInstitute@gmail.com](mailto:BancroftInstitute@gmail.com)

### Keynote Abstract

Most workers who experience a work-related injury or illness return to work in a timely and relatively straightforward manner. However, some experience more complex and prolonged trajectories and are often unable to return to or maintain employment. Research suggests that both system-level and individual-level factors may hinder return to work, and that these difficulties may be amplified among vulnerable workers. We discuss these dynamics in the context of two studies on return-to-work difficulties, one conducted among injured workers in general and the other on linguistic minorities in particular. Our results highlight specific policies and practices that fail to properly consider workers' social location and that negatively shape their experiences. We discuss the implications for workers and their families as well as for our ability to accurately measure the problem.

### Time and Venue

Thursday November 17, 2016  
10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**Polish Combatants Association Hall** (Branch 20)  
206 Beverley Street, Toronto, Ontario

**Directions:** The venue is one block south of College Street, on the Northwest corner of Beverley Street and Cecil Street

