Results The factorial analyses indicated a two-dimensional structure (perception of work ability/mental resources and diseases and health restrictions). The value of Cronbach’s α and McDonald’s ω was, respectively, 0.80 and 0.87. The theoretical hypothesis of the construct validity were confirmed with direct correlation and significant of the WAI with the scores of reward, control and self-evaluate of the health status; inverse correlation and significant with the scale of need for recovery, psychological distress, effort, over-commitment and demand.

Conclusion We found good evidence for a high reliability and construct validity of WAI questionnaire, supporting its use in future analyses in similar populations.

Introduction The City of Oshawa in Durham, Canada is a major manufacturing hub for automotive production. In 2008–2009, we witnessed an unprecedented economic crisis not seen since the great depression. A record number of auto-workers lost their jobs as a result. Little is known about how these lay-offs affected the health and well-being of the workers. This exploratory study examined the impact of being laid-off on the emotional, physical, social and financial health of auto-workers.

Methods A purposive sampling technique was employed to recruit participants from two locations: The CAW Community Action Centre and a Service Fair organised by the Durham Region Local Training Board. All participants were asked to complete an in-depth demographic and health questionnaire.

Results A total of 36 laid-off workers were interviewed between 28 October and 30 November 2009. Approximately two-third of our participants were male and the mean age was 45 (SD=6, range=30–61). The average length of time since laid-off was 13 months (SD=8, range=1–36). Half of our participants reported a feeling of burden to others and a loss of social status, and 75% reported a loss of identity and pride. With regard to the self-rated health and well-being status on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) since being laid-off, our participants reported mid-level physical health (score=3.12), but relatively poor emotional health (score=2.59), social health (score=2.5) and financial health (score=1.97).

Conclusion Job loss can have a wide range of effect on one’s well-being, including physical, emotional, social and financial health.