

# The 2023 White Paper on Measures to Prevent Karoshi, etc. [Summary]

(FY2022 Summary of Death and Injury from Overwork in  
Japan and the Implementation of Measures the  
Government Has Taken to Prevent It)

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare,  
Labour Standards Bureau, Office for  
Policy on Karoshi Prevention

(Note) FY2022 refers to the year from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.

# “White Paper on Measures to Prevent Karoshi, etc.” of the FY2023

- The White Paper on Measures to Prevent Karoshi, etc. is a statutory white paper to be reported to the Diet based on the Act Promoting Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork. The 2023 edition is the 8th in the series (Cabinet decision and the Diet report).
- Key Points of the 2023 White Paper
  - In addition to survey results on sleep duration, the White Paper includes the results of a survey and analysis for industries identified as priority research targets (media industry, teachers, etc.) in the “Outline of Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork” (Cabinet Decision on July 30, 2021) and for the arts and entertainment sector where the need for survey research has been pointed out.

«Reference» Act Promoting Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork (Act No. 100 of 2014)  
(Annual Reports)

Article 6 Every year, the government must submit to the Diet a report giving a summary of death and injury from overwork in Japan and describing the implementation of measures that the government has taken to prevent it.

## Structure of the White Paper

### Chapter 1 Status of measures for working hours and mental health, etc.

- 1 Status of working hours
- 2 Status of measures for mental health in the workplace
- 3 Status of suicide

### Chapter 2 Current Status of Karoshi, etc.

- 1 Status of compensation for karoshi, etc.
- 2 Status of compensation for occupational accidents of national public employees
- 3 Status of compensation for occupational accidents of local public employees

### Chapter 3 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

- 1 Analysis of cases involving workers' compensation claims
  - (1) Cases of decision to grant workers' compensation claims (approved)
  - (2) Cases of decision not to grant workers' compensation claims (non-work-related)
  - (3) Media industry
  - (4) Education and learning support industry

### Chapter 3 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

- 2 Labor and social field survey (questionnaire survey)
  - (1) All industries
  - (2) Media industry
  - (3) Professionals in the arts and entertainment (performers)
- 3 Results of analysis of claims for which public employees' compensation was decided (approved)
- 4 Analysis of epidemiological studies, etc.

### Chapter 4 Status of implementation of measures to prevent karoshi, etc.

- 1 Measures taken by labor administrative agencies, etc.
- 2 Survey and research, etc.
- 3 Enlightenment
- 4 Improvement of consultation system, etc.
- 5 Support for private organizations' activities

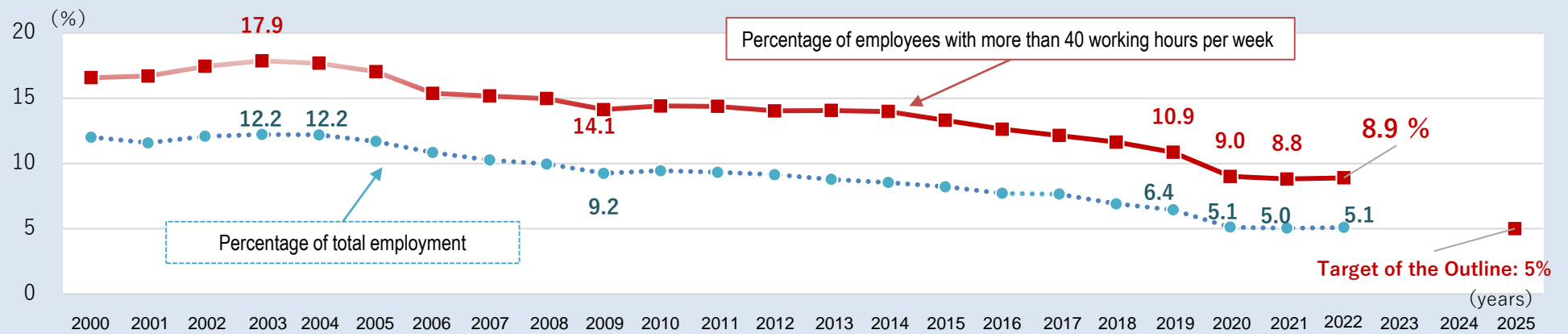
Columns with case studies of efforts by companies and organizations

# Chapter 1 Status of measures for working hours and mental health, etc.

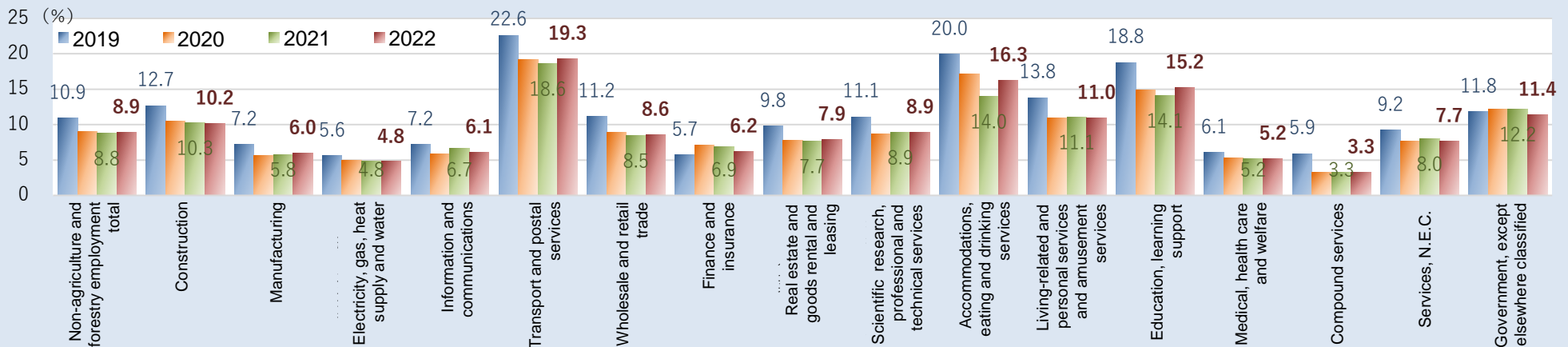
## 1 Status of working hours, etc. (Status of working hours)

- Among employees with more than 40 working hours per week, the percentage of those with more than 60 working hours per week is declining. The percentage decreased by nearly 2 percentage points in 2020, then remained generally unchanged until 2022 (8.9% in 2022).
- By industry sector, the 2022 figures show an increase in some industries over the previous year, while many industries remained unchanged or decreased.  
\* Industries showing an increase over the previous year included: "Transportation and postal services," "Accommodation, eating and drinking services," "Education, learning support," etc.

### Percentage of employees with more than 60 working hours per week



### (By industry: 2019 - 2022)



# Chapter 1 Status of measures for working hours and mental health, etc.

## 1 Status of working hours, etc. (Status of a system that sets a minimum limit on the interval between working hours (i.e. work-interval system) and annual leave)

- While the percentage of companies that had never heard of the work-interval system increased, that of companies that had introduced the system continued to increase (5.8% in 2022).
- The percentage of employees taking annual paid leave has increased for seven consecutive years (2021: 58.3%).
- The average number of days of annual (paid) leave taken increased for both national and local government employees (the number of days taken by main government ministries and prefectural governments, which had decreased in 2020, also increased from the previous year).

### Work-interval system

(Changes in the percentage of companies that answered "do not know about the work-interval system")



\* The figures for 2017 represent the percentage of companies that "have no plans to introduce the work-interval system and are not considering it".

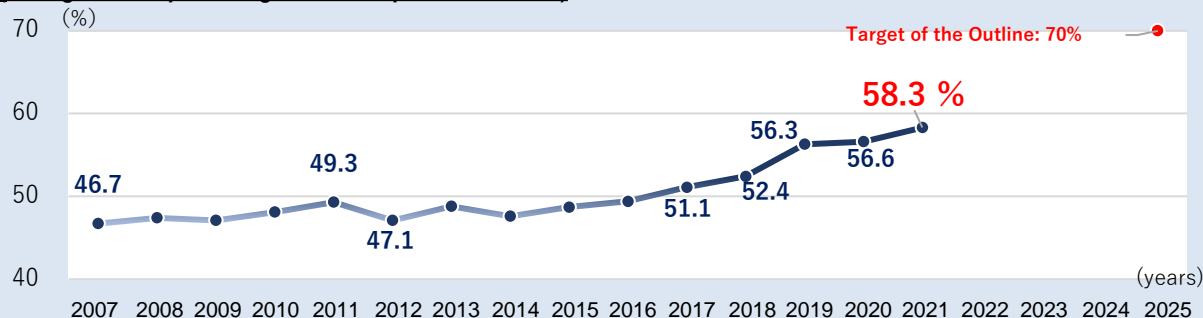
(Changes in the percentage of companies that have introduced the work-interval system)



(Source) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, based on "General Survey on Working Conditions"  
 \* The "work-interval system" refers to setting a certain number of hours of rest between the end of the workday and the beginning of the next workday.  
 \* The survey was conducted based on the status as of January 1.

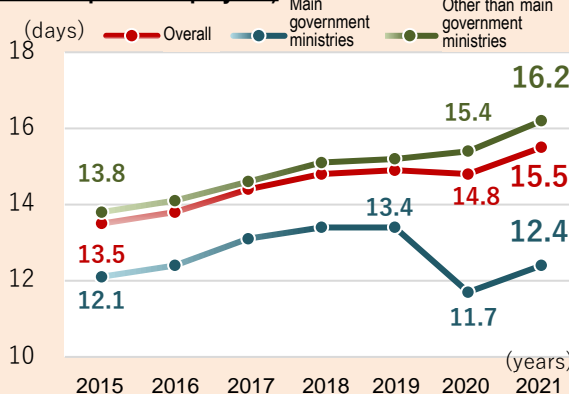
### Employees taking annual paid leave

(Changes in the percentage of annual paid leave taken)



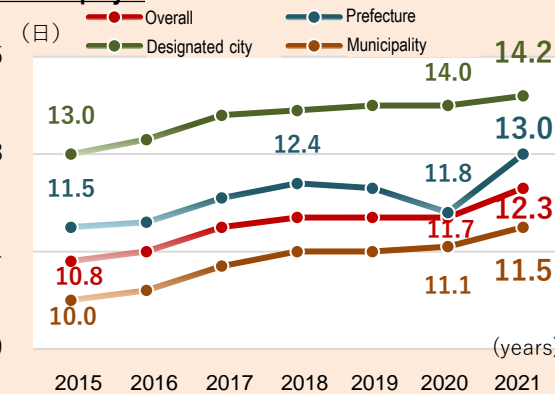
(Source) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, based on "General Survey on Working Conditions"  
 \* It indicates the situation for one year in each surveyed year.  
 (If a company manages its data on a fiscal year basis, the figures indicate the status for the previous fiscal year.)  
 \* From April 2019, employers were required to designate the timing of annual paid leave of 5 days per year.

(Average number of days of annual leave taken by national public employees)



(Source) National Personnel Authority, based on "Survey of Remuneration of National Public Employees"

(Average number of days of annual leave taken by local public employees)



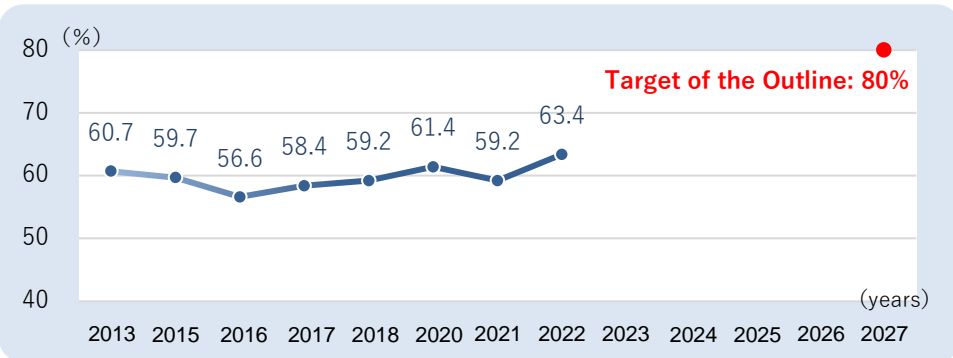
(Source) Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, based on "Survey on Working Conditions, etc. of Local Governments"

# Chapter 1 Status of measures for working hours and mental health, etc.

## 2 Status of measures for mental health in the workplace

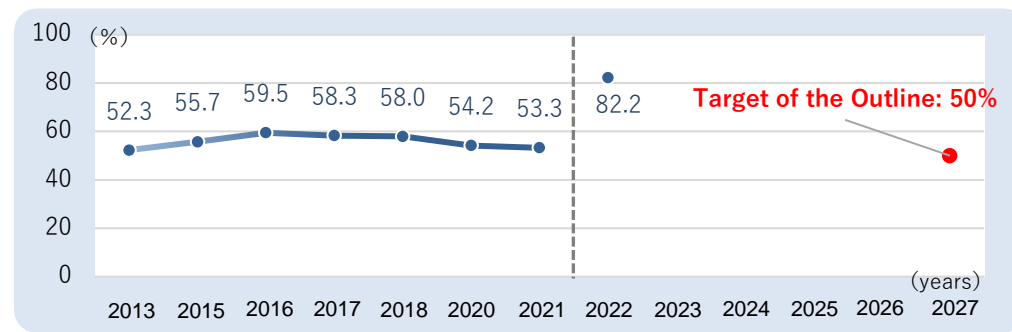
- The percentage of business establishments engaged in mental health measures has remained at around 60% (2022: 63.4%).
- 32.3% of small-scale establishments with fewer than 50 workers conducted stress checks in 2022.
- 82.2% of workers in 2022 reported having strong anxiety, worries, or stress related to their work or professional lives.

### Establishments engaged in mental health care



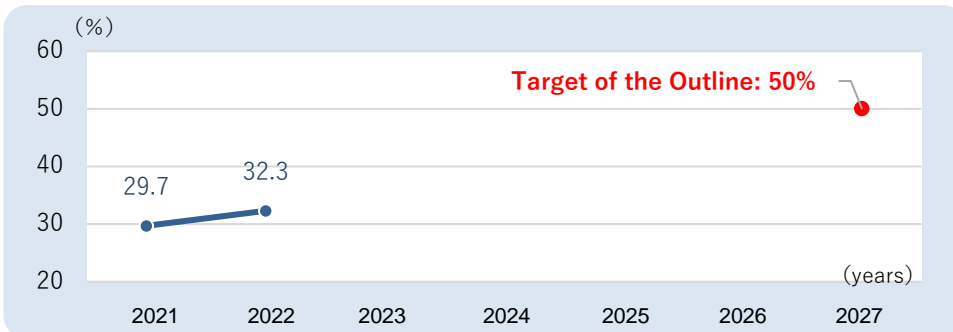
(Source) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Survey on Industrial Safety and Health (Fact-finding Survey)"

### Percentage of workers having strong anxiety, worries, or stress related to their work or professional lives



(Source) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Survey on Industrial Safety and Health (Fact-finding Survey)"  
 (Note) Some questions in the 2022 survey were revised from those in the 2021 Survey; therefore, it is difficult to compare the results of the 2022 Survey with those of the previous year.

### Percentage of small-scale establishments with fewer than 50 workers that have conducted stress checks



(Source) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Survey on Industrial Safety and Health (Fact-finding Survey)" (Special tabulation)

### (Reference) Targets and results of the Outline before the 14th Industrial Injury Prevention Plan was developed

- The percentage of "workers who have a place to consult about their worries, concerns, or stress at work, including resources outside the workplace"

(Target) 2022: 90% or more  
 (Actual results) 2021: 70.3% 2022: 79.8 percent

(Source) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Survey on Industrial Safety and Health (Fact-finding Survey)"

- Proportion of establishments that analyzed the results of stress checks for each group and utilized the results

(Target) 2022: 60% or more  
 (Actual results) 2021: 63.2% 2022: 59.6 percent

(Note) The survey covers establishments with 50 or more workers that have conducted stress checks.  
 (Source) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Survey on Industrial Safety and Health (Fact-finding Survey)" (Special tabulation)

\* When the 14th Industrial Injury Prevention Plan (from FY 2023 to FY 2027) sets new numerical targets, the Outline states that efforts will be made to achieve these targets.

# Chapter 2: Current Status of Karoshi, etc.

- Number of cases granted (approved) for workers' compensation
  - Although the number of cases of brain and heart diseases has been declining, it increased from the previous year in FY2022 (FY2022: 194 cases). The number of deaths decreased for the third consecutive year (FY2022: 54 cases).
  - Mental disorder cases have been increasing since 2019 (FY2022: 710 cases). Suicide cases have decreased for three consecutive years (FY2022: 67 cases).

(Reference) Approved cases per million people (Est.) (private organization workers and national public employees for FY 2022, local public employees for FY 2021)

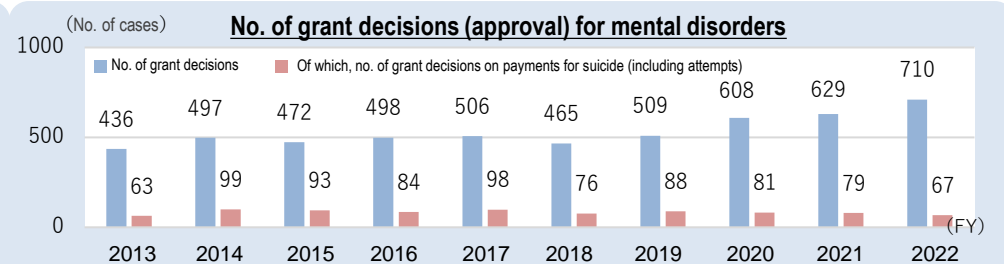
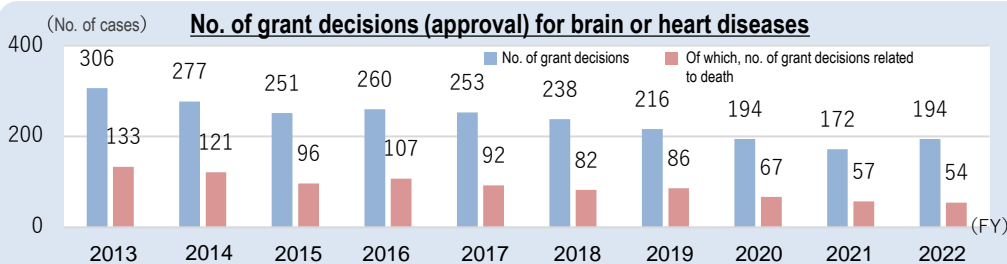
Brain or heart diseases: 3.4 cases for private organization workers, 4.4 cases for national public employees, 7.8 cases for local public employees

Mental disorders: 12.3 cases for private organization workers, 20.0 cases for national public employees, 23.5 cases for local public employees

\* Figures for the "private sector" are estimated from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' "Labor Force Survey," for "national public officers" from the Cabinet Personnel Bureau's "Statistical Table of National Public Employees in the Regular Service Tenure of Office Conditions," etc. and for "local public officers" from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' "Survey on Actual Salaries of Local Public Officers," etc.

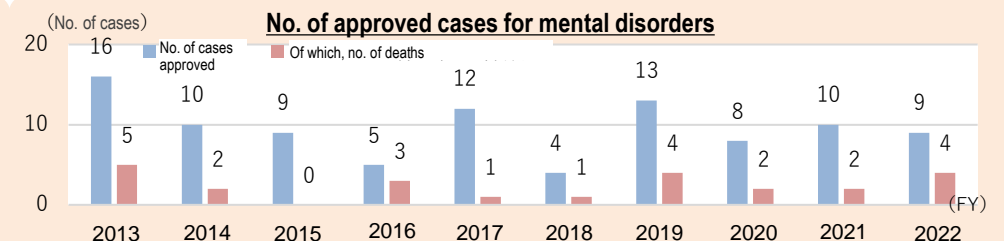
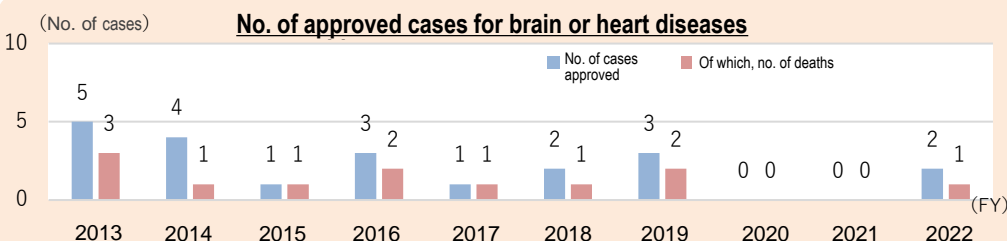
## 1 Status of compensation for work accidents of private organization workers

➢ In FY2022, the number of approved cases for brain or heart disease related to COVID-19. (\*) was 3, while the number of approved cases for mental disorder was 18. \*The claimant alleged that there were incidents related to COVID-19 at his/her work.



## 2 Status of compensation for occupational accidents of national public employees

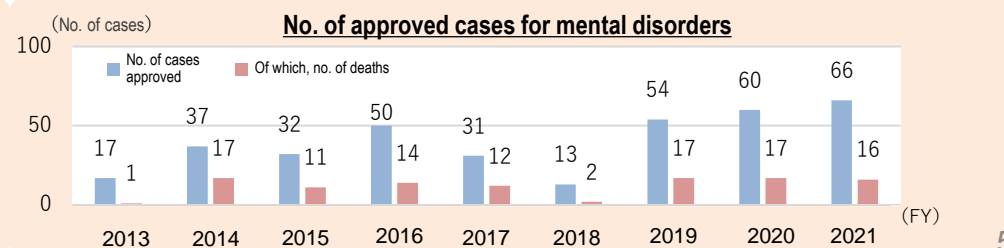
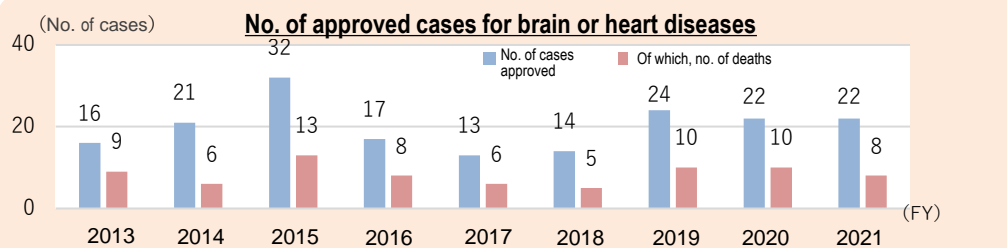
(Source) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, based on the "Compensation for Workers Suffering from Brain/Heart Diseases/Mental Disorders (Karoshi, etc.)."



(Source) National Personnel Authority

## 3 Status of compensation for occupational accidents of local public employees

(Source) Fund for Local Government Employees' Accident Compensation



# Chapter 3 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

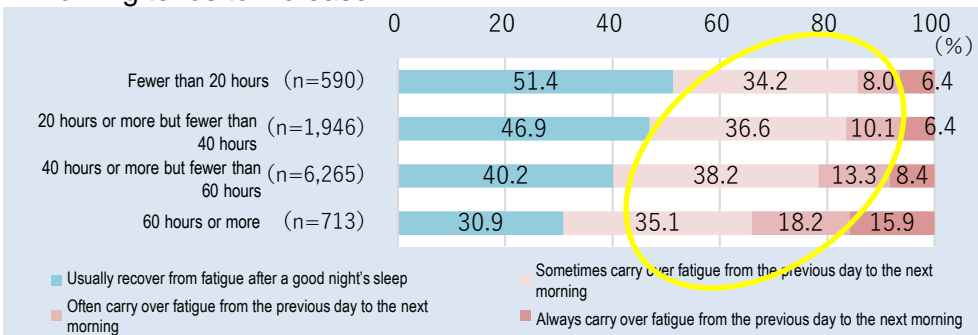
## 1 Questionnaire survey targeting workers (all industries)

(Source) Social Science and Occupational Health Research Group, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health based on "Labour and social survey and study for the current status of overwork-related disorders in FY2022"

- A questionnaire survey was conducted targeting workers, including self-employed individuals and company executives. The ideal and actual sleep durations were analyzed.

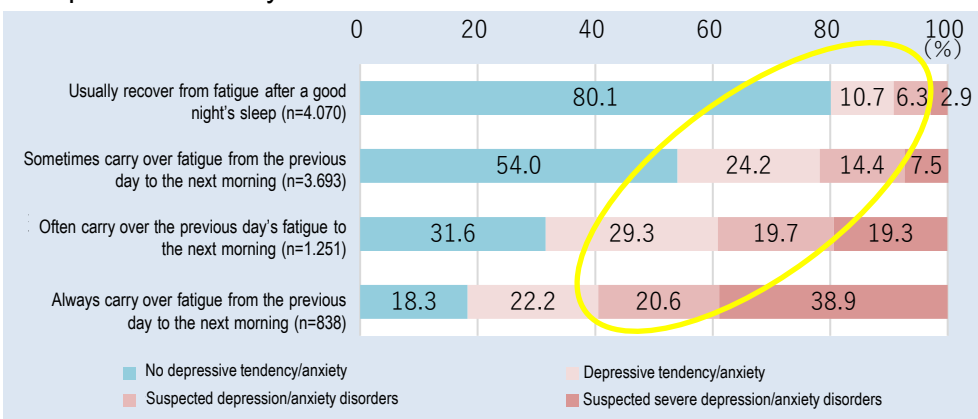
### ① Actual work hours per week and frequency of fatigue carryover

- As the number of actual work hours per week increases, the frequency of carrying over the previous day's fatigue to the next morning tends to increase.



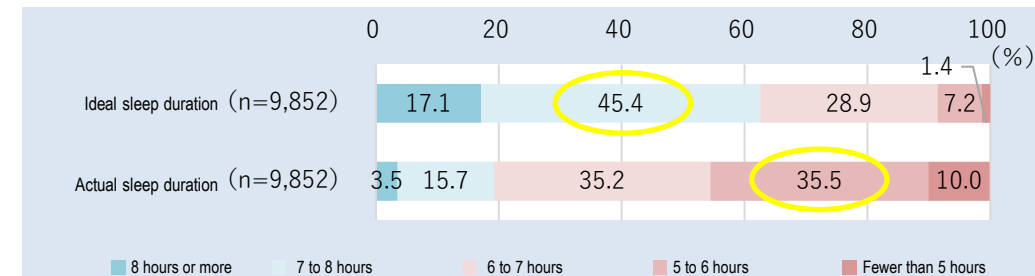
### ② Correlation of frequency of fatigue carrying over and depressive tendency/anxiety

- As the frequency of carrying over the previous day's fatigue to the next morning increases, the percentage of those with "depressive tendency/anxiety" and those with "suspicion of depression/anxiety disorder" tends to increase.



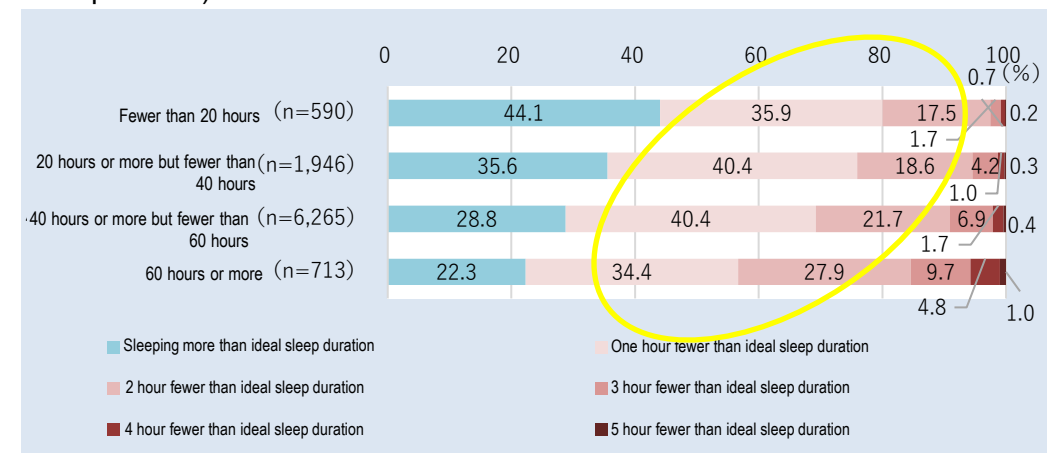
### ③ Ideal and actual sleep duration

- Most respondents answered that their ideal sleep duration was "7 to 8 hours," and most also answered that their actual sleep duration was "5 to 6 hours."



### ④ Discrepancy between actual work hours per week and ideal sleep duration

- As the number of actual work hours per week increases, the discrepancy between ideal and actual sleep duration (feeling of sleep deprivation) tends to increase.



# Chapter 3 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

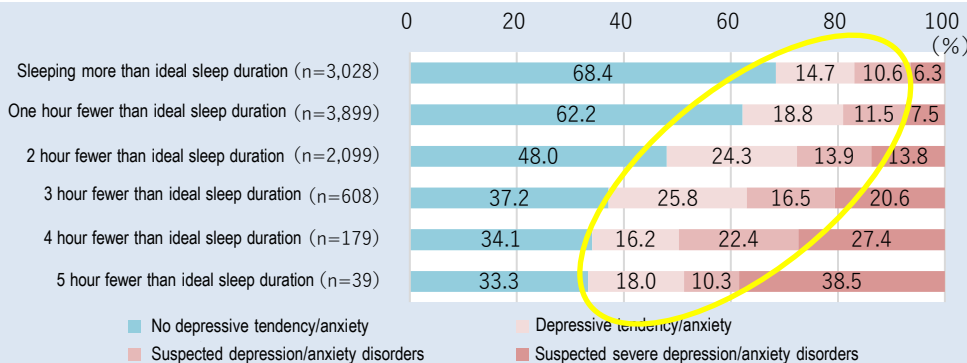
## 1 Questionnaire survey targeting workers (all industries)

(Source) Social Science and Occupational Health Research Group, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health based on "Labour and social survey and study for the current status of overwork-related disorders in FY2022"

- Analysis of the status of ideal and actual sleep duration and the experiences of harassment

### ⑤ Discrepancy between ideal sleep duration and depressive tendencies/anxiety

- As the discrepancy between ideal and actual sleep duration (feeling of sleep deprivation) increases, the percentage of those with "depressive tendency/anxiety" and those with "suspicion of depression/anxiety disorder" etc. tends to increase.



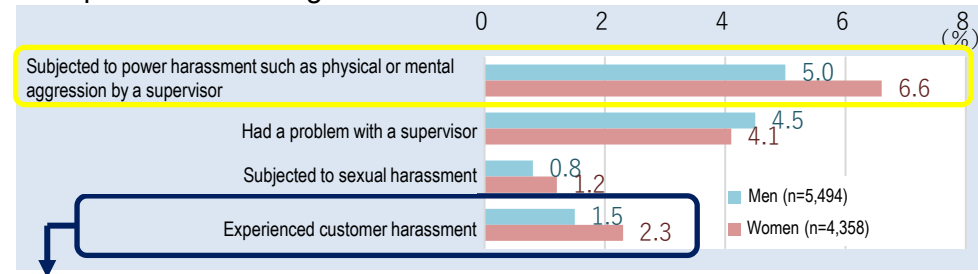
### ⑥ Discrepancy between ideal and actual sleep duration, and relationship between sleep duration and subjective well-being

- As the discrepancy between ideal and actual sleep duration increases (feeling of sleep deprivation), subjective well-being (SWB) becomes lower.



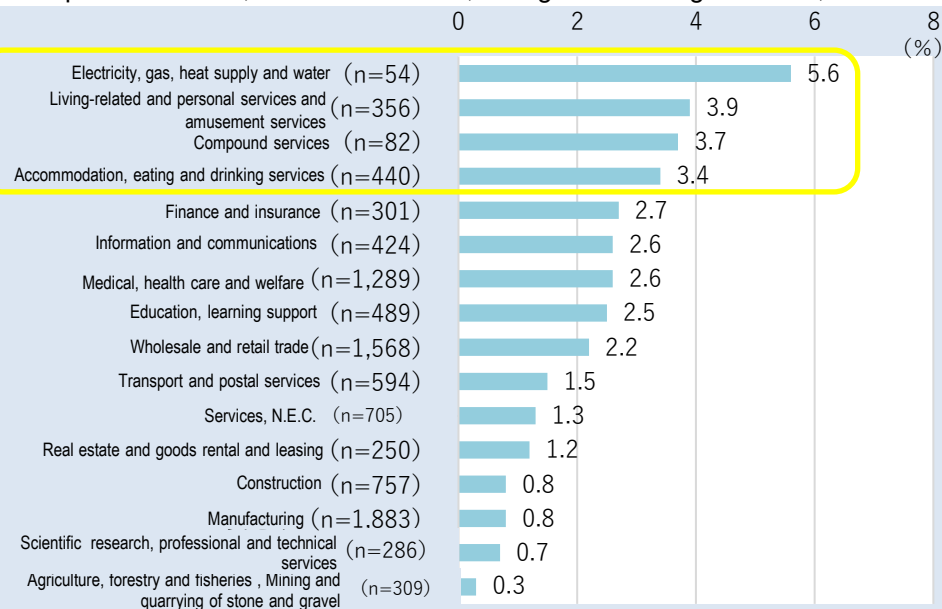
### ⑦ Experiences of harassment (in the past year)

- For both men and women, the percentage of those who are "Subjected to power harassment such as physical or mental aggression from a supervisor" is the highest.



### (Experiences of customer harassment by industry)

- The percentages are high in "Electricity, gas, heat supply and water", "Living-related and personal services and amusement services", "Compound services," "Accommodation, eating and drinking services", etc.





# Chapter 3 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

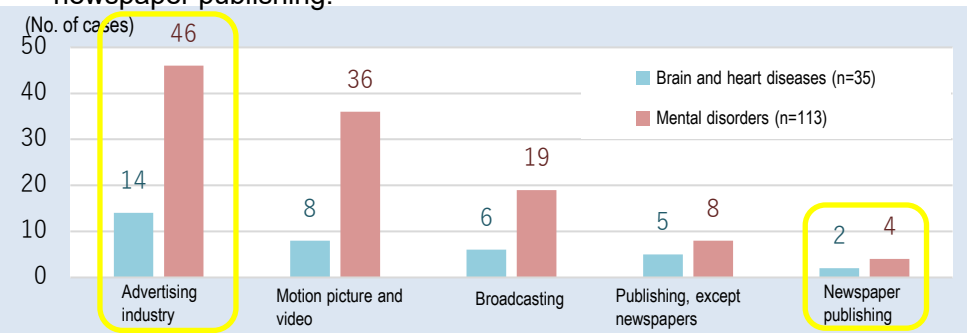
## 2 Media industry

(Source) Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, based on "Comprehensive study for the current status and preventive strategies of overwork-related disorders in FY2022" Social Science and Occupational Health Research Group "Labour and social survey and study for the current status of overwork-related disorders in FY2022"

● For the media industry, which is a priority industry, analysis was made of cases of workers' compensation decisions (approved) for 11 years from FY2010 to FY2020.

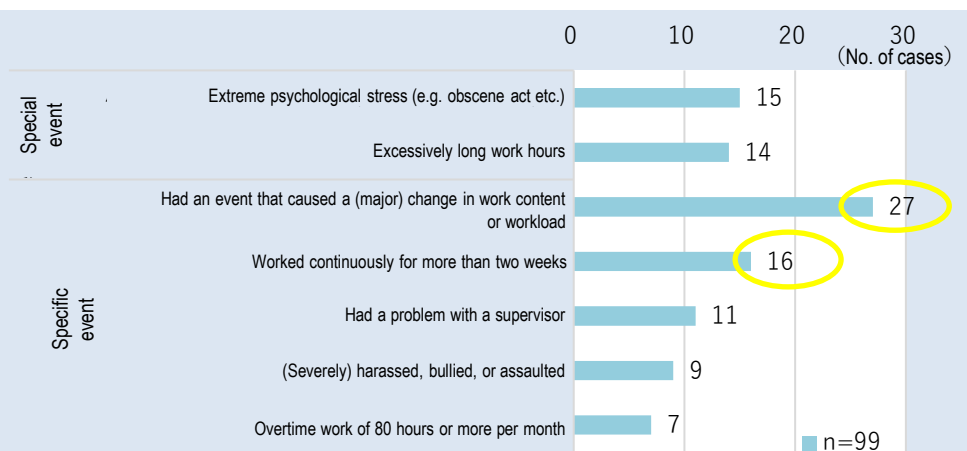
### ① Number of cases for which workers' compensation was decided (approved) by industry (brain and heart diseases, mental disorders)

○ For both brain and heart diseases and mental disorders, the number of cases peaked for the "advertising industry" and was the lowest for the "newspaper publishing."



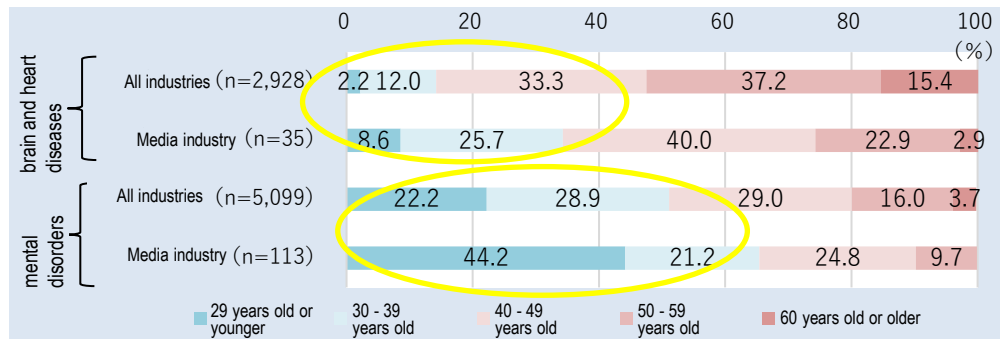
### ③ Events that resulted in workers' compensation being approved (mental disorders)

○ Common events that resulted in workers' compensation being approved include "Had an event that caused a (major) change in my work content or workload" and "Worked for more than 2 weeks consecutively", etc.



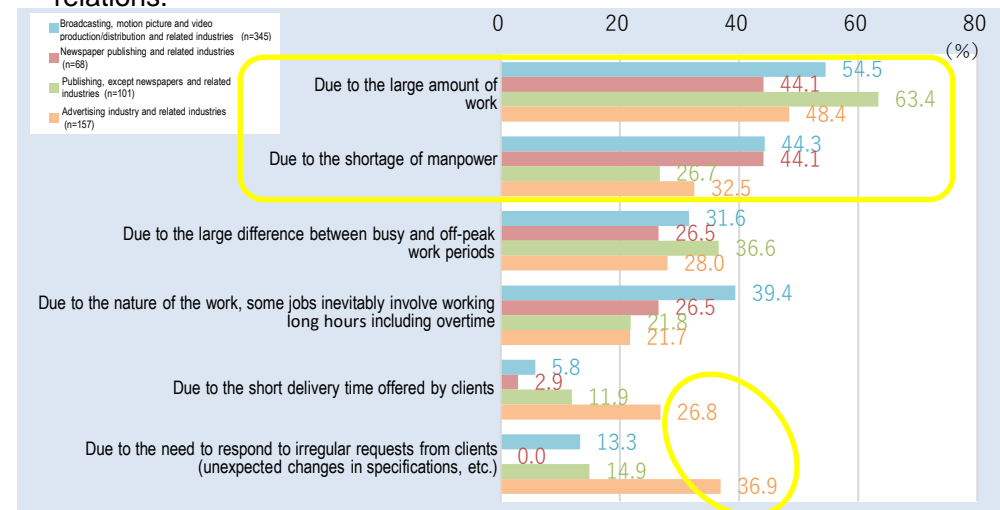
### ② Status of cases for which workers' compensation was decided (approved) by age group (brain and heart diseases, mental disorders)

○ Compared to other industries, the media industry has a higher percentage of younger workers in their 20s and 30s.



### ④ Reasons for overtime work (Workers' Survey)

○ In general, "Due to the large amount of work" and "Due to the shortage of manpower" were the most common responses; whereas in the advertising and related industries, many of the responses were related to customer relations.



# Chapter 3 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

## 3 Teachers (Education, learning support industry)

(Source) Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, based on "Comprehensive study for the current status and preventive strategies of overwork-related disorders in FY2022"

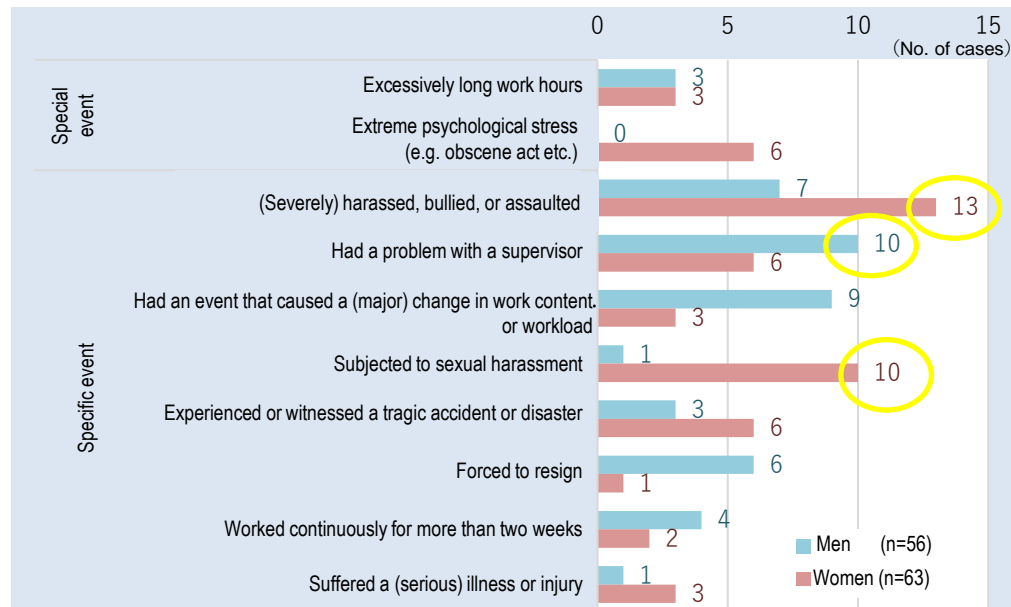
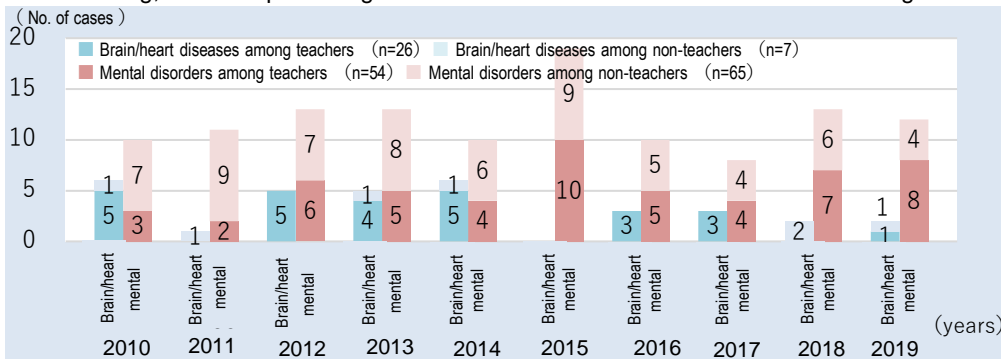
- For teachers (Education, learning support industry), which is a priority industry sector, cases for which workers' compensation had been decided (approved) for 10 years from FY2010 to FY2019 were analyzed.

### ① Number of cases for which worker's compensation was decided (approved) (Education, learning support industry)

### ② Events that resulted in workers' compensation being approved (Education, learning support industry and mental disorders)

- In recent years, the number of cases of brain and heart diseases has been decreasing; while the percentage of cases of mental disorders has been increasing.

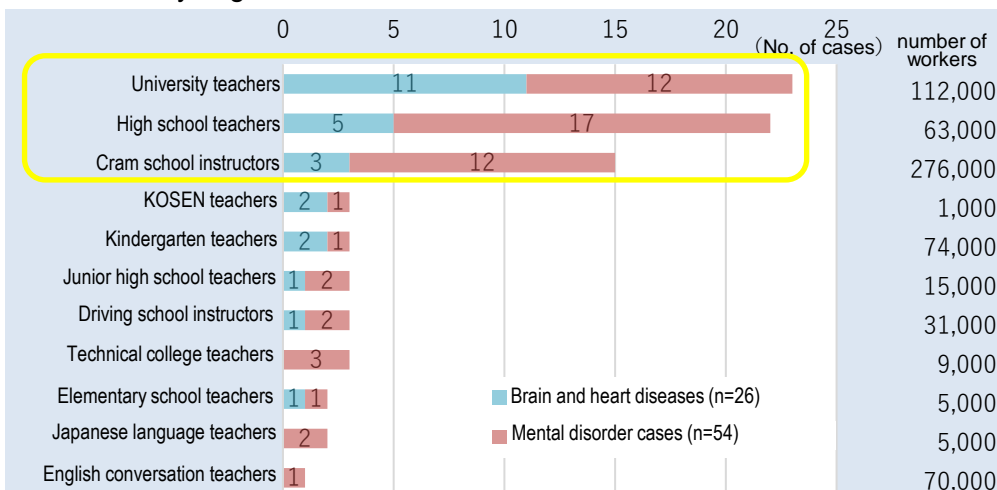
- Common events that resulted in workers' compensation being approved include: "Had a problem with a supervisor" was higher among men; whereas "(Severely) harassed, bullied or assaulted", "Subjected to sexual harassment" were higher among women.



\*1 Industrial injury cases exclude occupational accidents caused by public service.  
 \*2 "Brain/heart" refers to brain and heart disease cases and "mental" refers to mental disorder cases.

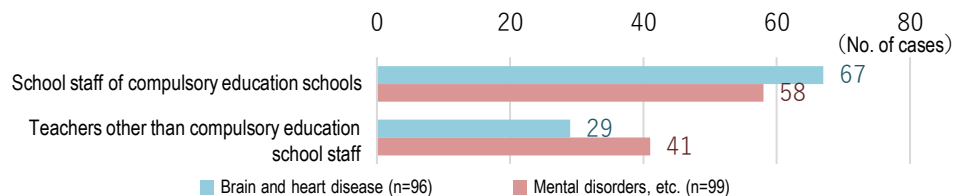
### (Breakdown of teachers)

- The highest number of respondents was "university teachers," followed by "high school teachers" and "cram school instructors."



\* Top 5 specific events were selected for men and women, respectively.

### Number of approved occupational accidents by public service



\* Data on teachers extracted from cases approved as occupational accidents for the period from January 2010 to March 2021.

# Chapter 3 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

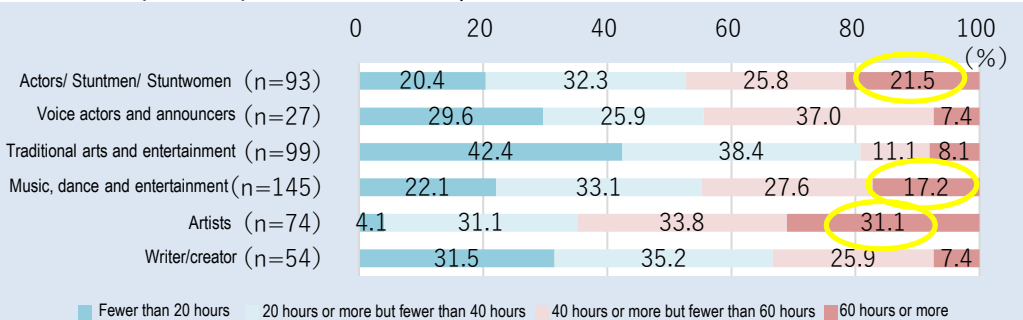
## 4 Professionals in the arts and entertainment (performers)

(Source) Social Science and Occupational Health Research Group, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health based on "Labour and social survey and study for the current status of overwork-related disorders in FY2022"

- Questionnaire survey of professionals in the arts and entertainment (performers)\* targeted according to priority industries.  
\* Persons who work as a sole proprietor (including those who have a management contract with an arts and entertainment agency, etc.) or under an employment contract

### ① Hours spent at work per week, etc.

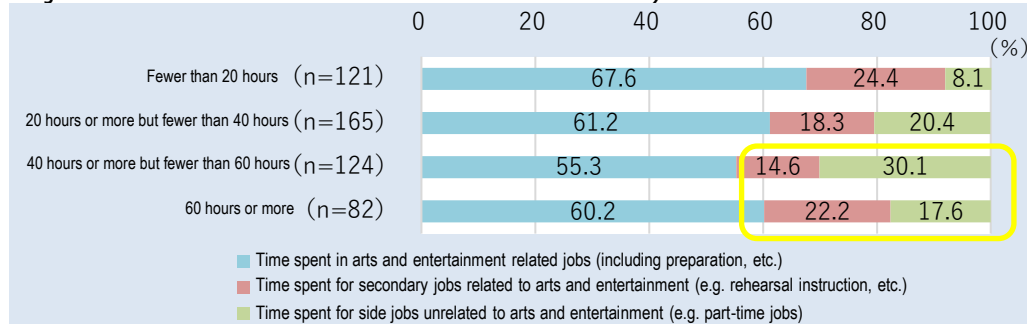
- The highest percentage of "60 hours or more" was for "artists," followed by "actors, stuntmen/stuntwomen," and "music/dance/entertainment," in that order.



\* The total of "Time spent in arts and entertainment related jobs (including preparation, etc.)," "Time spent for secondary jobs related to arts and entertainment (e.g. rehearsal instruction, etc.)," and "Time spent for side jobs unrelated to arts and entertainment (e.g. part-time jobs)." Each of the above three excludes travel time between home and work.

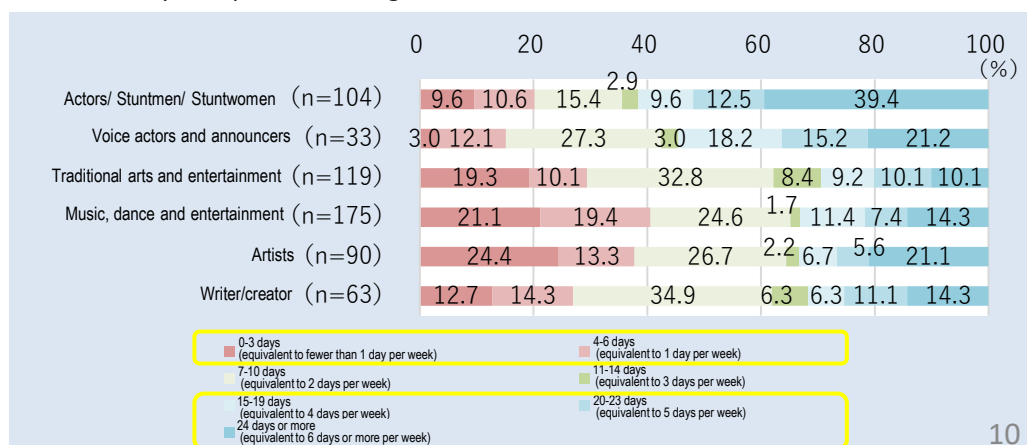
### ③ Percentage of the nature of job in hours worked per week

- In terms of hours worked, 44.7% of those who worked "40 hours or more but fewer than 60 hours" and 39.8% of those who worked "60 hours or more" were engaged in side jobs (including part-time jobs not related to arts and entertainment).



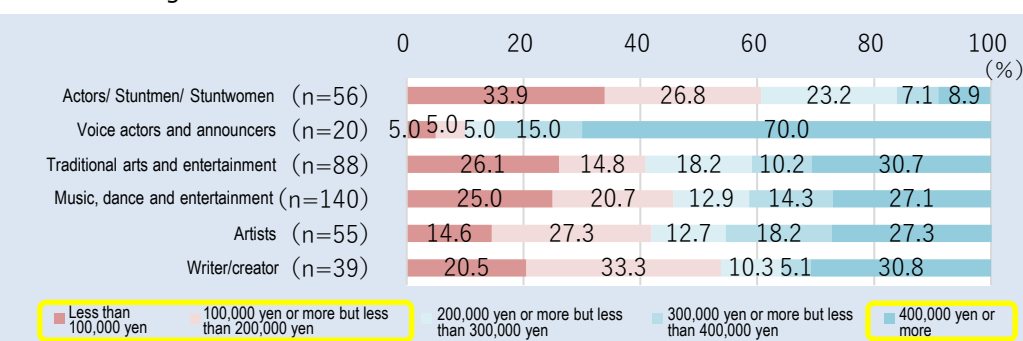
### ④ Number of days off per month on the schedule

- Those with less than the equivalent of one day off per week varied from 15.1% to 40.5%, depending on the type of work, while those with more than the equivalent of four days off per week ranged from 29.4% to 61.5%.



### ② Monthly income generated from arts and entertainment-related jobs

- Those earning less than 200,000 yen per month varied from 10.0% to 60.7%, depending on the type of work, while those with more than 400,000 yen per month ranged from 8.9% to 70.0%.



\* The total income from "arts and entertainment work" and "arts and entertainment-related side jobs (e.g. rehearsal instruction, etc.)."

# Chapter 3 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

## 4 Professionals in the arts and entertainment (performers)

### ⑤ Experiences of harassment

- The percentage of those who responded that “Work-related person said hurtful things” was generally high, while a certain percentage of those experienced physical attacks, etc. and sexual harassment.

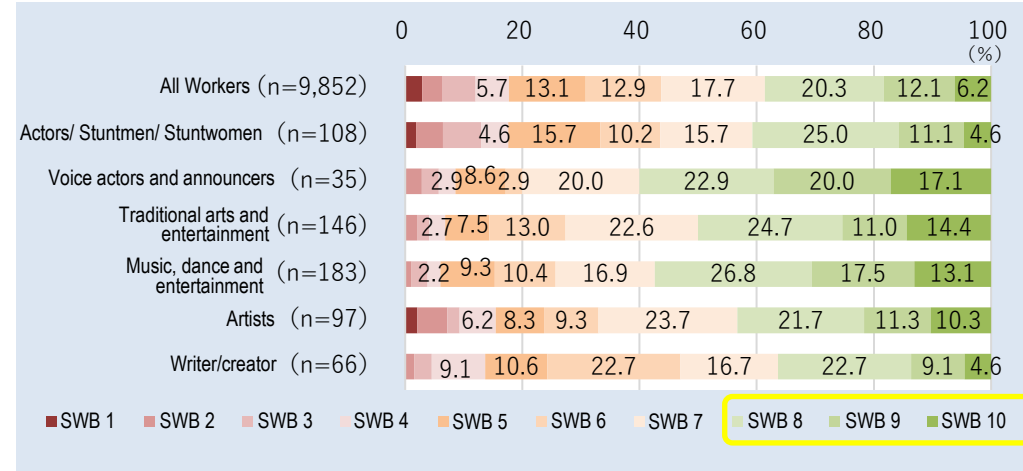
	Work-related person punched, kicked, slapped, or yelled at	Work-related person said hurtful things	Experienced sexual harassment, etc.
Actors/ Stuntmen/ Stuntwomen (n=108)	28.7	54.6	20.4
Voice actors and announcers (n=35)	22.9	68.6	25.7
Traditional arts and entertainment (n=148)	11.5	24.3	5.4
Music, dance and entertainment (n=183)	13.1	38.3	7.7
Artists (n=97)	13.4	37.1	12.4
Writer/creator (n=66)	15.2	50.0	16.7

\*1 The total number counted included those who “Experienced sexual harassment, etc.”, as the following: “Forced to expose my body to the extent that I felt ashamed”, “Touched excessively by a person associated with my work”, “Had to perform sexual acts that made me feel ashamed” and “Asked for a sexual relationship.”

\*2 Regardless of the time period (not limited to experiences in the past year).

### ⑥ SWB

- SWB generally exceeds that of workers as a whole.



### Efforts by administrative agencies

(1) As part of efforts to establish appropriate contractual relationships in the field of culture and the arts, the Agency for Cultural Affairs promotes the dissemination and awareness-raising of the guidelines, including the model contract form published in July 2022, as well as the implementation of training sessions and the establishment of a consultation service, to improve the business environment for people involved in culture and the arts, including freelance artists.

(2) To provide a secure working environment for freelancers, the Act on the Proper Treatment of Transactions with Specified Contractors\* was enacted in April 2023 and promulgated in May the same year. In future, specific details of the Act will be stipulated in ministerial ordinances, guidelines, etc., along with efforts to carefully disseminate the contents of the Act.

\* To ensure the appropriateness of transactions, this Act obliges businesses that entrust operations to specified contractors to clearly state the details of benefits, etc., establish payment due dates and pay remuneration by those dates. It also stipulates the obligation to accurately indicate recruitment information and to establish a consultation system related to harassment to improve the working environment for such contractors.

(3) In March 2021, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare issued a joint notice with related ministries and agencies to arts and entertainment industries groups, ensuring them to take thorough measures to prevent accidents while professionals in the entertainment work are on duty, making member companies thoroughly aware of the situation, and promoting approach by preparing guidelines, etc., considering the business characteristics of member companies, etc.

(4) Persons other than those under employment contracts and who are “engaged in the work of providing broadcasting programs (including advertising industry broadcasting), or in the work of directing or planning the provision of music, entertainment and other arts and entertainment in cinemas, yose (storyteller) theaters, stage theaters, etc.” shall be covered by the Special Insurance Coverage Scheme of the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance from April 1, 2021.

# Chapter 4 Status of implementation of measures to prevent karoshi, etc. 1

## 1 Measures taken by labor administrative agencies, etc.

- (1) Enforcement of regulations on maximum overtime work limits for industries placed under a grace period, etc.**
  - With respect to the construction industry, driving services, doctors, etc., to which the application of the overtime limit regulations has been deferred, to provide support to ensure smooth application of the regulations from April 2024.
- (2) Thoroughly implementing measures to reduce long work hours**
  - To provide inspection and guidance to companies where workers work for long hours and where deaths due to overwork have occurred.
  - To give guidance to the head offices of companies that engage in illegal long working hours at multiple branches, etc., to make company-wide improvements.
  - To ensure the proper monitoring of work hours based on the guideline.
  - To give guidance by the Director of the Prefectural Labour Bureau to the top executives of the companies engaged in illegal long working hours at multiple workplaces and disclose the companies' name.
- (3) Taking measures to prevent health problems caused by overwork**
  - To provide guidance regarding how to monitor work hours and ensure that workers who work long hours should be interviewed by a doctor, etc.
- (4) Taking measures for mental health**
  - To provide guidance on mental health measures to workplaces where a decision (approval) has been made to provide workers' compensation payments for mental disorders.
- (5) Taking measures for prevention of harassment**
  - To provide guidance to offices that have not yet taken measures to prevent harassment and to instruct offices where incidents of harassment have occurred regarding post-action measures and efforts to prevent recurrence.

## 2 Survey and research, etc.

- (1) Analysis of karoshi, etc. cases**
  - To analyze Karoshi, etc. cases of occupational accidents by industrial/public service.
- (2) Survey and analysis of karoshi, etc. from the perspective of labor and social fields**
  - To conduct a questionnaire survey of workers and workplaces to analyze the background factors of karoshi, etc. as well as the factors that form a good work environment.
- (3) Epidemiological studies, etc.**
  - To conduct long-term research on the relationship between work hours, work stress and the results of health checkups, etc. and to implement measures to improve the workplace environment and verify the effects of such measures, etc.
- (4) Development of tools to support measures to prevent karoshi, etc.**
  - To study measures to implement karoshi, etc. prevention measures, based on the results of previous studies.

## 3 Enlightenment

- (1) Publicizing and raising awareness among the public**
  - To publicize and raise awareness through various media, including posters and brochures, mainly during "Enlightenment Month of Karoshi, etc. Prevention" (November)
- (2) Disseminating information and enlightening students at universities, high schools, etc. about labor-related laws and regulations, etc.**
  - In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), to dispatch lecturers and make e-learning materials available at junior high schools, high schools and universities, etc., as a means of raising awareness of the program.
- (3) Publicizing and raising awareness of the need to reduce long work hours**
  - During "Enlightenment Month of Karoshi, etc. Prevention" (November),
    - (1) To request labor and management group to cooperate in publicizing and raising awareness of efforts to reduce long work hours, etc.,
    - (2) To prioritize inspection of workplaces where karoshi, etc. have occurred
    - (3) To implement the "Campaign to Eliminate Overwork," which includes nationwide toll-free telephone consultation services.
- (4) Publicizing and raising awareness of the prevention of health problems due to overwork**
  - To publicize the "Measures to be taken by business operators to prevent health problems due to overwork," and to raise awareness among the public and businesses during "National Occupational Health Week" (October) with the promotion of comprehensive measures to prevent health problems caused by overwork as a priority issue to enlighten the public, businesses and other stakeholders.
- (5) Promoting the introduction of the work-interval system**
  - To hold symposiums via online distribution and promote the introduction using "Manual for Introduction and Operation of the Work-Interval System"
  - To provide support for small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for the introduction of the work-interval system through the use of grants to SMEs.
- (6) Encouraging companies to review their work styles and promoting the use of annual paid leave**
  - To approach leading companies in the industry and in the region
  - Providing information regarding the initiatives of companies engaged in advanced work-style and vacation-style reforms on the "Work-Style and Vacation-Style Improvement Portal Site."
  - To hold a symposium on work-style and vacation-style reforms
  - To promote the use of annual paid leave in a timely manner, as well as to encourage employees to take leave that takes advantage of local features.
- (7) Disseminating information and enlightening the public about mental health measures**
  - To operate "Kokoro-no-mimi (Ear of mind)", a portal site for workers' mental health and provide various information on mental health measures.
  - To hold a symposium on mental health in the workplace and provide comprehensive information on mental health measures.

# Chapter 4 Status of implementation of measures to prevent karoshi, etc. 2

## 3 Enlightenment (cont.)

### (8) Disseminating information and enlightening the public to prevent workplace harassment

- To provide intensive publicity during the “Month for Eliminating Harassment in the Workplace” (December)
- To provide information on the portal site, Akarui Shokuba Ouendan (cheering squad for a cheerful workplace Portal Site), including court cases related to harassment, examples of corporate initiatives, in-house training materials, video and VR teaching materials and other materials.
- As part of measures to prevent terrible nuisance behaviors from customers (so-called customer harassment) preparing a "Corporate Manual on Measures against Customer Harassment," leaflets and enlightenment posters in cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies.

### (9) Responding to telework and other new work approaches in the living with- and post-COVID Era

- To promote telework that enables employers to manage the workforce appropriately and allows a secure environment for workers through the provision of counseling and consulting services, the establishment of a comprehensive portal site and subsidies for the introduction of telecommunications equipment, etc.
- To publicize the “Guidelines for the Promotion of Side/Concurrent Work” and promote health management apps to maintain and improve the health of workers who hold side/concurrent jobs.
- To raise awareness of the “Guidelines for Providing a Safe Working Environment for Freelancers,” and ensure smooth enforcement of the Act on the Proper Treatment of Transactions with Specified Contractors (Act No. 25, 2023).

### (10) Promoting efforts based on business practices, work environment, etc.

- For the industry of trucking, teachers, medical practitioner, information and telecommunications and construction, the government agencies and industry associations, etc. in charge of each industry take the lead in improving the working environment, including business practices.

### (11) Promoting efforts for young workers, elderly workers, workers with disabilities, etc.

- To support mental health education for young workers, provide assistance to ensure the health and safety of older workers through the Age-Friendly Subsidy, etc. and support workers with injuries and illnesses in achieving a good balance between work and medical treatment.

### (12) Disseminating information and enlightening public employees

- With regard to national public officers, to encourage reduction of overtime work and premeditated use of annual leave, examine how work-intervals should be implemented and to provide training in mental health care and prevention of harassment through e-learning and other means.
- With regard to local public officers, to provide local governments with advice on the operation of overtime limits regulations and health security measures, mental health measures and anti-harassment measures, etc. and to hold training sessions to raise awareness of work style reform, etc.

## 4 Improvement of consultation system, etc.

### (1) Establishing consultation services for working conditions and health care

- To provide consultation on working conditions, such as illegal overtime work, through the “Labour Standards Advice Hotline” (free telephone consultation service on weeknights, weekends and holidays).
- To provide consultation on mental health issues and health problems caused by overwork via SNS, email and telephone at “Kokoro-no-mimi” (Ear of mind), a portal site for workers’ mental health.
- To provide consultation services for workers who have problems with harassment at the “Harassment Counseling Room.”
- To provide consultation services on problems between freelancers and clients through “Freelance Problems Dial 110.”

### (2) Establishing a consultation system for public employees, etc.

- Establishing a "Counseling Room For Mental Health " for national public employees (online counseling has been available since FY2022), which can be used by employees of each ministry and agency and their family; a "Counseling Room for Mental Health-Related Return to Work" where specialist physicians provide consultation on returning to work and preventing recurrence of mental health problems among employees who have taken long-term sick leave due to mental health issues
- Providing local public employees with free health counseling by telephone at the Mutual Aid Association of Prefectural Government Personnel. Also, in cooperation with the Japan Local Government Employee Safety & Health Association, establishing a free consultation service at the Fund for Local Government Employees' Accident Compensation for employees of local governments and other organizations overseeing measures for mental health

### (3) Consultation for bereaved children from karoshi, etc.

- To establish online consultation service from 2022 to support the mentally healthy growth of the bereaved children from karoshi, etc.

## 5 Support for private organizations' activities

### (1) Organizing “Symposiums on Promotion of Prevention Measures for Karoshi, etc.”

- To organize “Symposiums on Promotion of Prevention Measures for Karoshi, etc.” in all prefectures to raise public awareness (48 venues + internet venues)

### (2) Organizing exchange programs for the bereaved children from karoshi

- Heal the physical and mental health of the bereaved children through the event and hold a social event for the bereaved children and their guardians to provide counseling, etc.

# 【Column】 From an industrial physician's perspective, the reality of overwork and efforts and issues by companies to prevent karoshi, etc.

I am an industrial physician. This refers to a doctor who is commissioned by a company to engage in so-called occupational health activities, such as health management of workers and management of the workplace environment and work.

In some companies, the workload is so excessive and the company so understaffed that managers are overworked, taking on the duties of their subordinates to ensure that their overtime does not exceed the maximum limit. However, there is growing recognition that overwork can lead to the development of brain and heart disease or mental illness. As a result, people are increasingly aware of the dangers of overwork. Including managers, companies now seek to ensure that industrial physicians provide guidance in interviews and manage the health of employees.



Kotaro Kayashima, President, Bodhi Health Care Support, Industrial Physician

## What I see from the interviews is that...

- ① Problems in the nature of the business: I really need to respond to requests from my clients. Given a limited workforce.... As you try to provide high quality services to satisfy clients, it inevitably takes a lot of time. Furthermore, in a world where mistakes are not tolerated, the number of items to be checked and documents to be submitted increases year by year, meaning ever-greater time and effort are spent.
- ② Individual problems: Even if the same work is done, the time it takes varies depending on the employee or supervisor. Some people try to do things as efficiently as possible by eliminating waste, while others work carefully and delicately until they are satisfied with their work, to ensure no mistakes. I think it's a difference in work style and values, but which is right?

Also, employees who are willing to work long hours for the company at their own risk are highly valued, while those who return home on time after doing what they are supposed to do are not. This kind of tendency still exists.

If we can move from the mindset of “we have to do it, even if it is impossible” to “we cannot do the impossible” and “we will not engage in something that we are forced to do, even if impossible,” I believe that most karoshi can be prevented.

## Fatigue can be classified into the following three categories:

- Physical fatigue - Physical work. General fatigue due to long hours in the office.
- Mental fatigue - Fatigue due to stress and stress on other people and work.
- Brain fatigue - Work that requires the use of the mind, such as preparing documents.

And the causes of fatigue include:

- Long work hours – Excessive workloads, difficult tasks that take a long time to complete.
- Human relationships - Stress and fatigue among supervisors, colleagues and customers.
- Job maladjustment - Inability to handle (adapt to) a new job description and unfamiliar tasks.

Even though we know the causes of fatigue and overwork, we are still overwhelmed by the work that must be done and feel compelled to do it. I believe that overwork refers to a state in which people are “exhausted by their work” and what is demanded of each individual is excessive.

To ensure we do not collapse from overwork, we must rest when we are tired (self-responsibility) and allow ourselves to take rest in moderation (managerial responsibility). We should also firmly acknowledge that we cannot do “impossible” things that exceed our limits and will collapse if we try. In reality, however, I believe there are quite a few cases where this is not possible.

Because the number and length of interviews I am requested to do is increasing every year.

Finally, the most dangerous symptom of overwork is the inability to sleep. You feel exhausted and sluggish, but are unable to sleep. Even when you do sleep, you wake up several times during the night. Despite being tired from work, you will recover from fatigue, provided you can get a good night's sleep. However, with poor quality sleep, excessive fatigue will worsen. If you are having trouble sleeping, don't keep it to yourself, talk to someone. Your boss, a co-worker, a family member, or visit a hospital to see a doctor.

# Column List

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2	Improving the working environment through the guidance of labor standards inspectors <b>Office for Special Measures against Overwork, Inspection Division, Labour Standards Bureau, MHLW</b>
3	From the perspective of industrial physicians, the reality of overwork, efforts and issues by companies to prevent karoshi, etc. <b>[Contribution] Kotaro Kayashima, President, Bodhi Health Care Support, Industrial Physician</b>
4	Breaking into Truck Drivers' Irregular Work Hours - Prospects from Problem Identification to Solution - <b>[Contribution] Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health</b>
5	The Union's efforts on "Zero Karoshi, etc." <b>[Contribution] Japanese Trade Union Confederation</b>
6	Keidanren's Efforts to Promote Work Style Reform <b>[Contribution] Japan Business Federation (Keidanren)</b>
7	Dispatching bereaved families of karoshi victims and experts on labor issues as lecturers to schools - In 2022, the seventh year of the program, 15,013 students participated in 195 sessions - <b>[Contribution] Yutaka Iwaki, Lawyer, Executive Director, National Center for Preventing Karoshi</b>
8	Changes in Attitudes after Being Entrusted with a Project to Promote Measures to Prevent Karoshi, etc. <b>[Contribution] Process Unique Co.,Ltd.</b>
9	[Efforts by Companies] Case Study of Mental Health Measures by Industrial Physicians and Other Occupational Health Staffs' Active Involvement - <b>Fujitsu General Limited</b> -
10	[Efforts by Companies] Cases of Telework Utilization, Cases of Mental Health Measures for Telework Implementation - <b>DeNA Co., Ltd.</b> -
11	Let's think together about the "2024 Problem of Logistics" <b>[Contribution] Japan Trucking Association</b>
12	[Efforts by Companies] Cases of Health Projects and Joint Efforts with Other Companies for Better Health - <b>Saisho Express Co.</b> -
13	[Local Governments' Efforts] Cases of Measures to Prevent Overwork among Teachers - <b>Saitama Prefectural Board of Education</b> -
14	[Efforts by Companies] Case Studies of Efforts for Work Style Reform in Industries and Operations where Overtime Limit Regulations are Deferred - <b>Heiwa Construction Co.</b> -
15	Online Consultation Service - Seeking to support you in changing the way you feel and desire, not the way you think - <b>[Contribution] Hisako Sato, Representative, Mentore Support</b>
16	Symposium to Promote Measures to Prevent Karoshi, etc. in 2022 <b>Office for the Promotion of Measures to Karoshi, etc., General Affairs Division, Labour Standards Bureau, MHLW</b>
17	Report on the Exchange Meeting for Bereaved Children from Karoshi, etc. <b>[Contribution] National Association of Families Fighting Karoshi Shinobu Watanabe, Coordinator, Exchange Group for Bereaved Children from Karoshi</b>
18	International Efforts to Prevent Karoshi <b>[Contribution] Hiroshi Kawahito, Lawyer, Secretary General, National Defense Counsel for Victims of KAROSHI</b>
19	Associations of Families Fighting Karoshi in various fields and regions <b>[Contribution] National Association of Families Fighting Karoshi In charge of occupational accidents for public employees, Sachiko Kudo; Nagano Association of Families Fighting Karoshi, Noriko Koike; Nagoya Association of Families Fighting Karoshi, Keiko Isama; Okayama Association of Families Fighting Karoshi, Hiroaki Nakagami</b>
20	Japan Society for Karoshi Research -Long Work Hours and Death by Overwork in the Corona Pandemic - <b>[Contribution] Kenichi Kuroda, Professor Emeritus of Meiji University, Representative Director, Japan Society for Karoshi Research</b>