

Overview

Information collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) through its annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) is used to generate state and national estimates of the incidence of non-fatal workplace injuries and illnesses. SOII data is based on employer reports of OSHA 300 log records. Recent research has shown that workplace injuries and illnesses are underreported in the SOII.

The objective of this study was to explore whether there is a relationship between unreported cases in the SOII and employer workplace injury and illness recordkeeping or business practices. Interviews were conducted with a sample of Washington establishments that had participated in the SOII. Responses among establishments who had reported all eligible workers' compensation claims in the SOII were compared to responses among establishments with unreported claims.

Employer Recordkeeping and Injury Reporting

Exploring the relationship between employer recordkeeping and underreporting in the BLS Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses.

American Journal of Industrial Medicine

Sara E. Wuellner, MPH and David K. Bonauto, MD, MPH

Key Findings

- 90% of the 110 interviewed participants did not comply with required OSHA recordkeeping regulations
- Non-compliant OSHA recordkeeping was due, in part, to participants mistakenly equating OSHA case and workers' compensation claim definitions.
- Reported compliance with OSHA recordkeeping regulations was similarly poor among establishments with unreported workers' compensation claims in the SOII and those with complete reports of claims.
- Establishments with unreported workers' compensation claims in the SOII were more likely to :
 - operate multiple shifts
 - use workplace injury data as a job performance measure for supervisors and injury recordkeepers
 - have special instructions from the BLS to report a subset of injuries

Impact

Noncompliance with OSHA recordkeeping regulations, failure to follow BLS survey instructions, ineffective systems for capturing worker reports of injuries within a company, and business practices that incentivize low injury rates are barriers to accurate SOII data.

Contact the author:

Sara.Wuellner@Lni.wa.gov

Research for Safe Work

The SHARP Program at the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries partners with business and labor to develop sensible, effective solutions to identify and eliminate industry-wide hazards. Learn more at www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/

Find the article here:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajim.22350/abstract>

This research was supported in part by a grant from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics

75-12-2014
FY14-456 [05-2014]