

Overview

Obesity has been declared an epidemic that threatens public health across the nation. Workplace wellness programs can benefit from understanding the role that occupation plays in obesity.

The aims of this study were to estimate the frequency of obesity by occupation; examine whether on-the-job physical activity and health behaviors such as diet, smoking, and leisure-time physical activity were associated with obesity; and to identify occupations in need of workplace obesity prevention programs. Data from the Washington State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System was used in the analysis.

This study is unique because the association between occupation and obesity is not well known. These findings can be used to prioritize obesity prevention efforts.

Obesity in the Workforce

Obesity Prevalence by Occupation in Washington State, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

Preventing Chronic Disease, 2014

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Key Findings

- The occurrence of obesity among all Washington workers was 25%. The national occurrence of obesity has been previously published as 27%.
- Occupations with a higher frequency of obesity included truck drivers, transportation and material movers, protective services (e.g. police), and cleaning and building services.
- Workers with physically demanding jobs had less obesity compared to workers without physically demanding jobs.
- Workers who consumed adequate fruits and vegetables and had adequate leisure-time physical activity were less likely to be obese than those who did not.

Impact

The frequency of obesity varies substantially by occupation. Employers, policy makers, and health promotion advocates will find these results useful to their workplace obesity prevention programs.

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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://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/13_0219.htm

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