



Work-Related Injury and Illness

Self-reported work-related injury or illness – Washington, 2011-2014

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Jennifer L. Marcum¹, Brian Chin², Naomi J Anderson¹, and David K Bonauto¹

Overview

Work-related injury and illness are frequent and have lasting consequences.

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a statewide telephone survey conducted annually to collect information on health outcomes and behaviors. We analyzed Washington State BRFSS data from 2011 to 2014 for associations between work-related injury and illness and characteristics such as worker demographics, health conditions, and behaviors. Among the 51,335 respondents, 51% were eligible to answer the work-related injury or illness question.

The BRFSS is unique compared to traditional occupational health surveillance in that it relies on worker self-report. In contrast, traditional systems rely on employer-report and are known to underestimate workplace injury counts. This is the first study to examine the associations between work-related injury and illness and personal characteristics as self-reported in BRFSS.

Key Findings

An estimated 6.4% of Washington workers reported injuries or illness during the previous year. Work-related injury and illness was associated with:

- Industry and Occupation
- Male gender
- Low socioeconomic status
- Chronic health conditions
- Substance use

The Washington BRFSS model could be adopted by other states to enhance occupational injury surveillance. Additionally, state data could be aggregated for larger scale evaluation.

Impact

BRFSS data can be used to enhance state tracking of work-related injury and illness trends, identify and describe worker disparities by industry and occupation, and generate hypotheses for control measures.

Contact the author:

Jennifer.Marcum@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 free article here:

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¹SHARP, WA State Department of Labor & Industries, Olympia, WA

²DHS, University of Washington, Seattle, WA