



Occupational Health Profile: Janitors

Using Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Data as an Occupational Health Profile: Washington State Janitors, 2011-2017

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Naomi J. Anderson, MPH and Jennifer L. Marcum, DrPH

Overview

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual state-based telephone survey funded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and conducted in all 50 states.

The BRFSS consists of a core set of questions and other modules added by the state. Washington State has added questions on industry and occupation (I/O) annually since 1995. I/O responses are coded to US Census I/O categories. This allows researchers to compare occupational groups.

BRFSS data can be used to characterize the health of workers by occupation. Identifying overall health needs can better inform policy and help create strategies to improve workers' health.

The purpose of this study was to characterize the overall health of Janitors in WA. WA BRFSS data from 2011-2017 were analyzed, comparing Janitors to workers in all other coded occupations.

Key Findings

Compared to workers in all other occupations, Janitors:

- Were less likely to be women and were more racially diverse.
- Had a lower percentage of workers reporting:
 - Using the internet in the last 30 days
 - Having a cellphone for personal use
- Had a higher percentage of workers reporting:
 - No healthcare coverage
 - Poor overall health status
 - Diagnosis of depression and arthritis
 - Inadequate sleep.
- Had lower educational attainment and lower household income.

Impact

Multiple risk factors compound the vulnerability of janitors. Janitors face hazardous work and low wages, and are a diverse population that may be less likely to have access to technology and may need culturally- and language-appropriate training and services.

Contact the author:

Naomi.Anderson@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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