

Demographic Groups in Construction Most Likely to Use Prescription Opioids

Prescription opioid use and associated factors among US construction workers

Xiuwen S. Dong, Raina D. Brooks, Chris T. Cain. American Journal of Industrial Medicine, 2020.

Overview

Construction workers are among the segments of the U.S. population hit hardest by the opioid epidemic: they are more likely to use opioids and to die of opioid overdoses than workers in other industries. However, most existing research on opioid use in construction (for example, findings from BLS injury data and workers' compensation claims) is unable to explore the overall context of opioid use. This study, which analyzed data from the 2011-17 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS), examined prescription opioid use among nearly 8,000 MEPS respondents who were employed in construction, and a variety of occupational and nonoccupational factors that could underlie such use.

Key Findings

- Over 10% of construction workers in the survey used prescription opioids during the study period.
- Prescription opioid use among construction workers is associated with both occupational and nonoccupational factors.
- Prescription opioid use by construction workers with occupational injuries was more than triple that of their non-injured counterparts.
- Prescription opioid use was significantly higher among workers who were:
 - older
 - women
 - white, non-Hispanic
 - part-time (working less than 35 hours a week)
 - in administrative support, sales and service roles
 - in poorer physical and mental health
- Prescription opioid use were significantly lower among construction workers who were:
 - Hispanic
 - lacking health insurance

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See abstract:

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