

Key Findings from CPWR Research:

Using New Data to Improve Understanding of Construction Injuries

Title of report and authors:

Data linkage of state registries for assessment of construction injuries
Lee Friedman, Peter Ruestow, Linda Forst. CPWR Report, July 2011.

Overview:

The research project's goal was to develop a way to merge three different databases then link the common data to give a more complete picture of work-related injuries in construction. Researchers from the University of Illinois – Chicago used the Illinois Trauma Registry (ITR), the Hospital Discharge database (HD), and the Illinois Workers Compensation Claims database (IWCC -C).

Key Findings:

- White non-Hispanic construction workers were consistently awarded higher monetary settlements than black and white Hispanic construction workers; the average amount was \$5,824 higher.
- Severity of the injury matters: Each day a patient remained in the hospital was associated with an increase in 1.2 weeks of temporary total disability, and patients requiring continued care after discharge from the hospital at another facility received 10.75 more weeks of temporary total disability than those discharged directly home.
- Researchers expected that worker injury claims in the workers' compensation database would find links in 10-15% of among the other databases, judging by an exploratory research project, but only 9.9% (1,664 comp records) linked with medical record data. Most injuries/illnesses generating a workers' comp claim do not require hospitalization.
- Although linking comp records to hospital records can be difficult if the identifiers within the datasets are not clear, the research project proves that industry can get a better view of construction injuries through data linkage, as hospitals collect information that workers' comp claims do not.
- By linking records within the databases, researchers gained a better understanding of the relationship between acute injury and long-term impairment and disability, and they were able to investigate potential ethnic disparities in workers' compensation.

For more information, contact
Lee Friedman: lfried1@uic.edu