WMSDs in Construction down from 1992, but Still Major Occupational Hazard


Xuanwen Wang, Xiwen Sue Dong, Sang D. Choi, John Dement. Occupational and Environmental Medicine, December 2016 (Online)

Key Findings

- The study found that the number of reported WMSDs among American construction workers dropped by 66% between 1992 and 2014. However, the rate of WMSDs in the construction industry remained higher than the average across all industry sectors.
- The median days away from work (DAFW) due to WMSDs in construction increased from 8 days to 13 days between 1992 and 2014, and the proportion of WMSDs for construction workers aged 55 to 64 years almost doubled.
- By occupation, construction laborers had the largest number of WMSD cases, while helpers, heating and air-conditioning mechanics, cement masons, and sheet metal workers had the highest rates of WMSDs.
- The major cause of WMSDs in construction was overexertion, with back injuries accounting for more than 40% of WMSDs among construction workers. The estimated wage loss for private wage-and-salary construction workers was $46 million in 2014.