



Suicides among construction workers

Suicide among construction workers in the United States, 2021

William Harris, Amber B. Trueblood, Thomas Yohannes, Christopher P. Rodman, Rick Rinehart, American Journal of Industrial Medicine, July 2024.

Overview

Although construction workers have one of the highest suicide rates of workers in any industry, there are limited studies of the characteristics of those who die by suicide. This study aimed to address this gap and identify workers at higher risk. The researchers used the Mortality Multiple Cause-of-Death data from the National Center for Health Statistics National Vital Statistics System to find deaths by suicide among decedents aged 16-64, while worker estimates for rates come from the 2021 Current Population Survey. The study examined 29,153 deaths by suicide across all industries, including 5,213 in construction, through descriptive statistics, crude suicide death rates, and rate ratios.

Key Findings

- In 2021, the suicide death rate for workers in construction was 2.4 times higher than in all industries (46.1 versus 19.5 per 100,000 workers, respectively).
- Almost 1 in 5 deaths by suicides with a reported industry were in construction (17.9%), even though construction workers accounted for only 7.4% of the workforce in the same year.
- The male suicide rate in construction was 50.5 per 100,000 workers, compared to 30.0 per 100,000 workers for all industries.
- Male iron and steel workers had the highest suicide rate (n=47; 117.89 per 100,000 workers) among examined construction occupations, and laborers had the highest number of deaths by suicide among men (n=1,498; 71.1 per 100,000 workers).
- These findings demonstrate the burden of suicide is not equally shared within the construction industry, supporting the need for additional research to understand those at higher risk of suicide and to guide the development of mental health resources for construction workers.

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