

Trends in work-related asthma

Work-related asthma surveillance in Washington State: time trends, industry rates, and workers' compensation costs, 2002-2016

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Overview

Work-related asthma is asthma caused or made worse by exposures in the workplace. It includes both new-onset and work-aggravated asthma.

This study used data from Washington State's work-related asthma surveillance program, which uses workers' compensation data as its primary data source.

This study compared the incidence rates of work-related asthma claims to all workers' compensation claim incidence rates over time. Incidence rates and costs were further analyzed by industry.

Claim rates were calculated using total work hours reported by employers covered by the workers' compensation system. Claim costs are for accepted state-fund claims adjusted to the 2015 Consumer Price Index and were compared by industry and year.

Key Findings

- Work-related asthma claim incidence rates decreased an average of 8.9% annually from 2002 – 2016.
 - The incidence rate for all workers' compensation claims also decreased over the study period, but not as much as the decrease in work-related asthma claims incidence rate. The all workers' compensation claim rate had its steepest decrease from 2008 to 2010 at an average annual decline of 8.4%.
- Work-related asthma claim rates were highest for workers in Public Administration, Manufacturing, and the Agricultural, Forestry Fishing and Hunting industries.
- Median claim costs for work-related asthma ranged from \$595 to \$1442 and did not change significantly by year ($p = 0.2$).
- The share of claim costs, by industry, was highest for the Manufacturing (21.3%) and Construction (16.4%) industries

Impact

Work-related asthma rates are declining in Washington State. However, workers across all industries in Washington remain at risk and surveillance is necessary to characterize the magnitude and burden of this disease. Prevention efforts remain an important occupational health priority.

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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 article here:

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