

Racial and ethnic inequalities in work-related injuries among construction workers

Injury inequalities among U.S. construction workers

*Samantha Brown, Raina D. Brooks, and Xiuwen Sue Dong.
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Overview

Despite progress towards equality, studies show that minority workers in construction still lag behind their white, non-Hispanic counterparts in education, wage rates, family income, health insurance coverage, pension plans, training, and occupational safety and health interventions. This study uses data from the 2004–2017 National Health Interview Survey, a nationally representative household survey, to explore racial and ethnic inequalities in work-related injuries among construction workers. Racial/ethnic disparities in demographic, socioeconomic, and injury status were examined, and injury differences were evaluated in multiple logistic regression analyses controlling for potential confounders.

Key Findings

- In construction, minority workers are more likely to suffer work-related injuries than white, non-Hispanic workers. This study reveals lower socioeconomic status (e.g., lower educational attainment, lack of health insurance coverage, and family income below the poverty level) among minority workers underlying the injury disparity.
 - Injury differences among races and ethnicities were strongly associated with demographics and socioeconomic inequalities.
 - The odds of work-related injury were significantly higher among workers who were younger, male, not college-educated, blue-collar, or had a family income below the poverty threshold when race/ethnicity and other variables remained constant.
 - Injury differences by race/ethnicity were no longer statistically significant after controlling for major demographic and socioeconomic factors.
- The findings suggest:
 - Injury differences among races and ethnicities were strongly associated with demographic differences and socioeconomic inequalities.
 - The identified higher risks among vulnerable worker groups in construction should be addressed through injury interventions.

For more information, contact:

Xiuwen Sue Dong: sdong@cpwr.com

Read the abstract:

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