

C1-2: The Proportion of Self-Reported Asthma Associated With Work in Three States: California, Massachusetts, and Michigan, 2001

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Keywords:

work-related asthma, population-based survey, surveillance

Background:

This abstract is part of umbrella abstract C1-1. Work-related asthma (WRA) is defined as asthma caused or aggravated by exposures in the workplace. Surveillance data based on physician reporting have been documented to provide undercounts of work-related asthma due to under-recognition, under-reporting, and other limitations. Representative, population-based data are needed to further examine the extent of WRA.

Objective:

To use a population-based survey to estimate the proportion of adult asthma that is work-related at the state level.

Method:

Questions were added to the 2001 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) questionnaire in California, Massachusetts, and Michigan to determine if respondents' asthma was related to their work.

Result:

Results from across these three states indicate that 12.4-13.1% of adults surveyed reported asthma sometime during their lifetime and 7.5-9.5% of adults reported current asthma. Of those with current asthma, 7.4-9.7% reported that their asthma may be work-related based on discussions with their health care provider. For men with adult onset asthma, the proportions were greater, 15-20%. These results were used to estimate that approximately 137,000 adults in California, 27,000 in Massachusetts, and

63,000 in Michigan currently have asthma that may be related to their work.

Conclusion:

These findings are unique in providing population-based estimates quantifying the potential scope of work-related asthma at the state level. Such data are essential to guide prevention efforts by emphasizing the importance of workplace exposures in adult asthma and the development of strategies to control and prevent exposures leading to asthma in the workplace.

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