

6th WORLD CONFERENCE

Injury Prevention
and Control

6^e CONFÉRENCE MONDIALE

Prévention et contrôle
des traumatismes

ABSTRACTS • RÉSUMÉS

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INJURIES, SUICIDE AND VIOLENCE:

Building Knowledge, Policies

and Practices to Promote a Safer World

TRAUMATISMES, SUICIDE ET VIOLENCE :

Construire un savoir, des politiques

et des pratiques pour promouvoir

un monde en sécurité

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WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN THE USA: FROM RESEARCH TO PREVENTION

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PROBLEM UNDER STUDY: Violence committed against workers while performing job-related tasks is an issue of paramount importance. In the USA, national data exist on both fatal and nonfatal workplace violence incidents and a number of state and industry-specific studies have been conducted to characterize specific risk factors and potential prevention strategies. This paper will synthesize data from a number of sources in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the range of important issues with regard to the incidence of workplace violence as well as the risk factors and prevention strategies.

OBJECTIVES: The objectives of this paper are to:

1. Provide an understanding of the nature and magnitude of workplace violence in the U.S.;
2. Describe the risk factors for workplace assault and homicide;
3. Discuss the various prevention strategies for reducing violence in high-risk work settings; and
4. Provide a framework for thinking about workplace violence research and how it can be used to guide and enhance prevention efforts.

METHOD OR APPROACH: Data from a number of national and other sources will be compiled to provide a comprehensive assessment of the nature and magnitude of workplace violence, including data from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The current literature on workplace violence will also be summarized with regard to risk factors, prevention strategies, and future research needs.

RESULTS: During the 5-year period from 1995 through 1999, there were an average 838 workplace homicides annually in the U.S. (BLS 2001). In 2000, there were 677 workplace homicides; 46% of these occurred in retail trades. With regard to nonfatal workplace violence, data from the National Crime Victimization Survey for the years 1992 to 1996 indicate that an average 2 million workers were victims of violent incidents while working or on duty each year (BJS 1998). The most common type of workplace victimization was simple assault with an estimated 1.5 million occurring each year. Approximately 12% of the nonfatal violent workplace crimes resulted in an injury to the victim and of those injured, about half received medical care. The occupational groups with the highest rates of victimization per

1,000 workers were law enforcement officers, taxicab drivers, workers in bars and gas stations, and mental health professionals. A number of strategies have been suggested to reduce workplace violence ranging from changes to the physical design of workplaces to administrative policies and procedures as well as various Behavioural or training approaches.

CONCLUSION: Workplace violence is a substantial contributor to death and injury on the job in the USA. While a number of strategies have been suggested and tried for reducing the incidence of workplace violence, there is little empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the various strategies, even in high-risk settings. Future research should focus on elucidating specific workplace and work task information to better understand risk factors for workplace violence and on evaluating the efficacy of various environmental, administrative, and Behavioural strategies in reducing the incidence and severity of workplace violence incidents.

LIMITS: The existing national data on workplace violence in the U.S. do not include sufficient detail to characterize the specific work tasks or workplace characteristics that might reduce (or increase) the likelihood of a workplace victimization. As well, there are very few rigorous evaluations of the various approaches to workplace violence prevention.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE PROJECT TO THE FIELD: This paper synthesizes data and information from a number of diverse sources and serves as a foundation for future research and prevention activities.