

3047.0 - The impact of COVID-19 on the social connectedness of Maine loggers

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 Monday, October 25, 2021

 10:30 AM - 10:45 AM

Session: Occupation Centered Social Connectedness (in-person)

Program: Occupational Health and Safety

Abstract

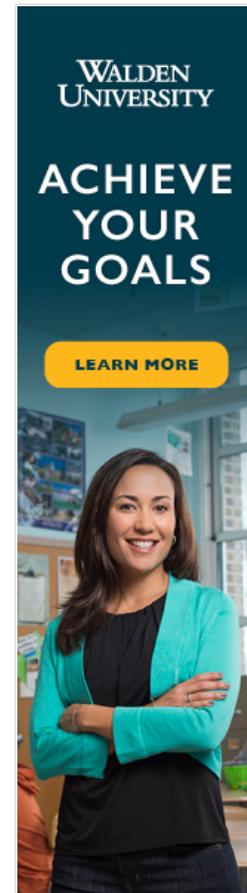
Background and Objective(s)

From late 2018 to early 2021, the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing collected data on health and risk exposures for Maine loggers through quarterly surveys and in-person health screenings to close the knowledge gap about non-fatal health and safety issues facing this work population.

Methods

Among the eight surveys sent to the Maine logger population, two surveys included the Medical Outcome Study (MOS) Social Support Survey developed by the RAND Corporation. The MOS Social Support Survey includes four functional support scales-- emotional/informational, tangible, affectionate, and positive social interaction--and constructs an overall functional social support index. The first survey was sent before and/or at the beginning of the pandemic using mixed methods; and the second survey was sent in December 2020/January 2021 using postal mail. Data analysis will be completed by May 2021.

Results

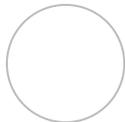


The surveys were sent to 293 loggers, with response rates of 51.9% (n=152) for the first survey and 52.2% (153) for the second survey. 116 loggers completed both surveys. Preliminary analysis of the data found the following: In the first survey, the scores in the four functional support scales ranges from 75 to 85 out of 100, with an overall average of 81; and in the second survey, the scores in the four scales ranges from 72 to 84, with an overall average of 78 out of 100.

Conclusions

Preliminary analysis indicates a negative correlation between loggers' social support and the pandemic. Further analysis will be conducted on additional survey data related to financial well-being and emotional health to develop a more nuanced understanding of the role of social support for a rural worker population, and how it changed with the pandemic. Furthermore, we will compare our results to other studies using the MOS Social Support Survey.

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