



Board 2: Variability in hydration and cooling practices among farmworkers at risk for heat-related illness in Washington and Oregon

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Background and Objectives: Although recommendations exist for the prevention of occupational heat-related illness among farmworkers that include certain hydration and cooling practices, it is not known to what extent these recommendations are universally practiced. The objective of the analysis was to compare hydration and cooling practices between a sample of farmworkers in Oregon and Washington. **Methods:** A survey of HRI risk factors was administered to a purposive sample of Oregon and Washington farmworkers, respectively. Researchers in both states jointly developed a core set of questions to include in respective surveys. Data collected included demographics, work history and current work practices, hydration practices, access and use of cooling measures, and headwear and clothing worn. A chi-square test was used to compare variables between states. **Results:** Overall, 197 participants completed surveys in the two states. While nearly all (98.5%) of participants consumed water at work the previous week, participants in Oregon were more likely than participants in Washington to consume soda, sports drinks, juice, hot coffee or tea, and iced coffee or tea. Workers in Oregon more frequently reported using various cooling measures compared to workers in Washington including shade structures, rest stations, car with air conditioning, wet clothes, and a hose. **Conclusions:** These results highlight the large variability between workers in two states regarding access and methods workers use to stay cool while working in the heat. While some differences may reflect differences in work and work environments, basic hydration and cooling recommendations appear to be practiced to varying degrees.

Learning Areas

Occupational health and safety

Learning Objectives

Identify current and recommended hydration and cooling practices among a sample of farmworkers in Oregon and Washington; Compare hydration and cooling practices between a sample of farmworkers in Oregon and Washington.

Keyword(S)

Occupational Health and Safety

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