



3377.0 - Young Victims of Sexual Harassment at Work: Results from a National Telephone Survey

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 Monday, November 4, 2019

 4:00 PM - 4:20 PM

 Pennsylvania Convention Center - 107B

Session: Assaults and Harassment Trends in the Workplace

Program: Occupational Health and Safety

Abstract

Background and Objectives: With the problem of workplace sexual harassment and assault receiving a lot of attention recently, we set out to: 1) explore whether these aspects of workplace violence are prevalent among young workers, 2) learn more about the experiences of young victims and who is at greatest risk; and 3) identify the consequences suffered by victims.

Methods: Using interview data from 1,032 young workers (ages 14-24) collected via national telephone survey, we used descriptive statistics to calculate the 12-month prevalence of sexual harassment and of sexual assault. Logistic regression was used to examine risk by worker demographics. We also describe select case characteristics and victims' self-reported mental health impacts.

Results: Twenty-two percent (n=223) of young workers were victims of sexual harassment in the 12-month period prior to their interview. Sexual assault was less frequent (5%, n=54). Those at greater risk of sexual harassment include: LGBTQ youth (OR=4.21, $p=0.001$); females (OR=3.09, $p=0.001$); and older workers ages 18-24 (OR=1.42, $p=0.022$). Twenty-two percent of harassment victims reported some form of social media (e.g., Facebook) was used to harass them. Perpetrators of sexual harassment included customers (48%), co-workers (47%), and supervisors (13%) (not mutually exclusive). After being sexually harassed self-reported mental health impacts included increased: anxiety(40%); stress(36%); insecurity(31%); distrust(30%) - as well as decreased confidence/self-esteem(21%).

Conclusions: This study demonstrates that sexual harassment affects not only adult workers but young ones as well who are primarily females in late adolescence. Given their particular risk, the experiences of LGBTQ youth should be explored more in depth. Such analyses are being prepared as are those to analyze whether mental health impacts differ by victim characteristics and how sexual harassment risk varies

by occupation and industry. We anticipate these results will allow us to identify workers at greatest risk to whom prevention efforts should be targeted.

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Learning Areas

Epidemiology

Occupational health and safety

Learning Objectives

Describe the prevalence of workplace sexual harassment among youth ages 14 to 24.

Describe how sexual harassment risk varies by worker characteristics. Name the mental health impacts experienced by young victims of workplace sexual harassment.

Keyword(s)

Adolescents, Workplace

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