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229312 Depressive symptoms among pork-processing workers in the Midwest

Sunday, November 7, 2010

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Objective: While pork processing is fast-paced and physically demanding industry, the mental health characteristics of pork processing workers have not been studied.

Methods: Depressive symptoms were assessed using the Burnam screening tool (6 items from the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale and 2 items from the Diagnostic Interview Schedule). Matched case-control analyses were conducted among 142 workers to evaluate the effect of depression on the risk of laceration injury.

Results: 404 workers were interviewed (70% male, 44% Hispanic) in two plants. Depressive symptoms were found in 11.9% (n=48) workers: 8% men and 20% women (OR 2.87, 95%CI:1.56-5.29, p<0.01). Hispanic ethnicity was not significantly associated with depressive symptoms: 19 (11%) Hispanic workers and 29 (14%) non-Hispanic workers reported depressive symptoms (OR 0.74, 95%CI:0.40-1.38, p-value 0.35). Working for more than 35 months (median) was associated with depressive symptoms (16% vs. 8%, OR 2.03, 95%CI:1.08-3.80, p-value 0.027). Presence of depressive symptoms was not associated with lacerations: among workers who experienced lacerations, 15% (20) reported presence of depressive symptoms compared to 12% (17) among workers who did not experience such injury (OR 0.81 (0.39-1.69), p-value 0.58). Adjusting for age, gender, ethnicity, and job tenure did not change the results.

Conclusions: There was a high prevalence of depressive symptoms among the workers. Depression was not shown to be a risk factor for occupational laceration injuries. Evaluation of depressive symptom causes among meatpacking plants workers is needed to elucidate prevention and treatment strategies.

Learning Areas:

Occupational health and safety

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the presence depressive symptoms among workers in pork-processing plants. 2. Evaluate the differences in the reporting of depressive symptoms by gender and race. 3. Evaluate the association between the presence of depressive symptoms and laceration injury risk.

Keywords: Occupational Health, Occupational Injury and Death

Presenting author's disclosure statement:

Qualified on the content I am responsible for because: I participated in data collection, data analysis, and interpretation.

Any relevant financial relationships? No

I agree to comply with the American Public Health Association Conflict of Interest and Commercial Support Guidelines, and to disclose to the participants any off-label or experimental uses of a commercial product or service discussed in my presentation.

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