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The RAACWI Injured Worker Health Survey

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Survey objectives

Through the health/health care utilization survey, we aim to:

- 1) provide a comprehensive profile of the health and social status, health care utilization, and self-reported health care deficits of injured workers with permanent impairments;
- 2) describe how the health and social status, health care utilization, and self-reported health care deficits of the achieved sample change over time.
- 3) provide health and health care utilization data in a format that is comparable to existing population health data, enabling comparison of the injured worker population to the general population



Negotiation of the survey content

- University and community members (primarily through the health theme and financial security theme meetings)
- Replication of questions from national health and labour force surveys for comparison purposes
- Survey questions 'tested' at RAACWI team meetings/discussions, and taken to Bright Lights injured worker group
- Consultation from York University, Institute for Social Research-staff regarding wording of surveys, length, etc.



What's in the survey?

- Injury experience & NEL award...
- Pre-injury status re: health, employment, occupation, income, marital and family status
- General current physical and mental health status
- Medical diagnoses & undiagnosed health problems
- Health care utilization/health care deficits
 - Emphasis on use of/access to pharmaceutical drugs
 - Insurance status/benefit/funding source of health services sought or received (if not OHIP covered)
- Social-economic status (family status and changes; social support; employment status & mobility; income & income sources)
 - Health of injured workers living in poverty vs. those who are not...



The survey content: comparison to Statistics Canada and other public data

- Existing surveys (health dis/ability/employment and income security) - insufficient numbers of injured workers
- Use of questions from these existing health and labour market surveys
- RAACWI survey has more detailed questions on the source(s) and costs of health care:
 - out-of-pocket
 - public insured
 - private insured
 - WCB provision



Pharmaceutical use addendum

- General questions about the numbers of drugs used are included in the survey to identify those who use many (4+) medical drugs
- Detailed medical drug-use sub-survey
- To document:
 - purpose of each drug used, and benefits/harms perceived
 - referral source, who initiated the referral of a OTC or Rx drug
 - whether/how the drug is used
 - costs/insurance status of each drug
 - self-medication



Recruitment of injured workers: which injured workers?

- First-time or one-time claimants of the WSIB who received a NEL* from January 1, 2005 to Nov 30, 2007
- Accidents occurred between January 1, 2002 to Nov 30, 2007
- Aged 25-55 as of Dec 1, 2007
- Fluent in English
- Excluded: deceased NEL recipients
- Sampling frame = 5,165 → n= 1503 (forwarded to RAACWI)



Role of WSIB in recruitment

- Identified and verified eligibility of injured workers who met the inclusion criteria
- Informed injured workers of their entitlement to participate in the survey
- Forwarded names/phone numbers of eligible injured workers who agreed to consider participating to the survey lead
- No further involvement of the WSIB*



Recruitment and retention challenges

- recruitment: \$\$ and time+++
- verbal vs. signed consent
- contact continuity form (to assist with follow up over time)
 - mixed response



Current status of the survey

- N= ~481 completed interviews
- Interviewing continuing to May 31, 2009

Challenges:

- Time lag between WSIB contact, RAACWI recruitment, and York University Institute for Social Research interviews
 - WSIB contact: November/December 2007
 - RAACWI recruitment: Nov 16, 2007 to March 12, 2008 & Oct 2008 to Apr 18, 2009
 - York interviews: May 2008 thru May 2009 (69% completed between May – Aug 2008)



Sample representativeness: a major challenge

- Sampling frame: N= 5,165: all WSIB NEL claimants whose WSIB records indicate eligibility for the study
 - WSIB successfully contacted 2729 (53%); 495 ineligible, 230 eligibility not determined; or eligible but refused (N=501)
 - WSIB contacts: 1503 agreed to be called by RAACWI and received information packages about the study
 - Survey Sample: N= ~ 481
- Does the sample “look like” the population from which it was drawn?



Does the sample “look like” the population from which it was drawn?

(preliminary....data collection is incomplete)

RAACWI Health Survey Initial Sample/Population Comparisons

	Population (Refusals) N=5165 (N=501)	Sample N = 458
Initial NEL	98%	90%
Subsequent NEL	2	6
don't know		4
Gender		
male	54%	39%
female	46	61
Age Group		
25-29	10%	5%
30-39	23	20
40-49	41	38
50-55+	26	37
% Impairment		(n=268)
< 5%	20%	5%
5-9%	25	18
10-14%	19	21
15-19%	14	18
20-24%	10	11.5
25-29%	5	9
30-39%	4	8
40% +	3	9
		(188/458 = 41% dk)



From the initial survey to longitudinal follow up

- To assess change in health, health care, employment, financial status, where appropriate, following the design of the longitudinal component of the Statistics Canada's National Population Health Survey (NPHS), and the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID).
- We aim to follow the same individuals over time
- New funding will be sought
- The ultimate intention of the research is to document longitudinal changes in health status/health care utilization and health care access of injured workers with permanent impairments
- Challenges: sample loss



Our commitment to the health survey

- Importance of health and ability status for getting back to a regular life
- Evidence from qualitative studies that initial injuries deteriorate with time
- Evidence that the loss of work results in emotional difficulties and for some injured workers, serious mental health problems such as depression
- What type of worker does well after a permanent impairment resulting from a workplace accident?



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