



A warm welcome to...
**The research and policy knowledge
exchange forum on immigration, work
and health**

Support generously provided by...

WorksafeBC

Canadian Institutes for Health Research

The Institute for Work & Health



Immigrant workers' experiences after a work-related injury

Investigators: Agnieszka Kosny, Ellen MacEachen, Peter Smith, John Shields

Project coordinators: Marni Lifshen, Cynthia Neilson

Funded by the WSIB - RAC



Aim of the study is to gain an understanding of new immigrants' experiences after a work-related injury AND examine the context and processes drive work-related injury trajectories

- IIWs knowledge of rights (reporting, refusing unsafe work)
- What facilitates or impedes filing of claims
- Experiences with workers comp system (language services, adjudication, voc rehab etc.)
- Experiences with employers and health care providers at the time and after injury
- Effect of injury on worker, family, finances, and future in Canada



Progress to date

- 14 in-depth interviews with service providers- good overview of issues
 - HCPs, legal advisors, union reps, settlement agency workers, WSIB
- 13 interviews with IIWs (17 left to do)
 - IIW arrived after 1990, after age of 16
 - Interviewing workers who have AND have not filed a claim
- IIWs found via IW groups, community orgs, HCPs, voc rehab schools, snowballing
- 6 IIWs and 1 SP required translators



Being a newcomer

Being new to Canada can mean:

- Not knowing common rules workplaces
- Not understanding nuances – sick versus sick from work
- Not understanding consequences - Importance of writing things down
- Not knowing about social programs/services that can help -WC, social assistance
- Having to work hard to establish yourself in a job & get experience - not wanting to 'rock the boat'
- Not having network of family/friends *or* being too reliant on family/friends
- As a result, workers can become easy targets for abuse



Language

- Language barriers affect
 - Understanding of rights
 - Understanding hazards in the workplace
 - Getting help and information
- Language barriers can leave worker “out of the loop”
 - Must rely on employers, co-workers or family to get information – not always accurate
- Workers who are proficient in English may still have problems with complex terminology and forms
 - Workers compensation terminology or processes



Translation

- Concerns around the quality and scope - formal translation not available in many orgs
- Family members often chosen as a first resource
- Concern about quality - language skills, not comfortable discussing everything
- Some expressed concern with professional translation too, not offered at the right time
- Translation accessed when things become complicated
 - problem with HC or claim
 - Some Eng language skills can delay referral to translator or can lead to translation services being taken away



Effect of injury

- Loss of future employment potential – especially after a serious or permanent injury
- Disillusionment with Canada – not the land of opportunity, safety and fairness imagined
- Financial hardship
 - Resources strained to begin with during process of settlement
 - Can't send money back home as planned
- Family problems
 - Translation – family may become overly involved
 - Dreams of reuniting family are shattered
 - Injury is hidden from family (loss of support)
 - MH issues, especially when there is no family and social support



Resources

Some services/resources available but...

- Workers do not always know what is available
- Workers often end up looking for information *after* an injury - not ideal!
- Little rights, OHS and WC information offered systematically (upon arrival in Canada, via settlement services)
- Access to services difficult because of workload and language issues
 - WC info in variety of languages, but forms in English
- Community workers, settlement staff, union reps, and HCPs are important intermediaries – independent from the WCB and can help filing a claim, fill out forms, ‘translate’ information

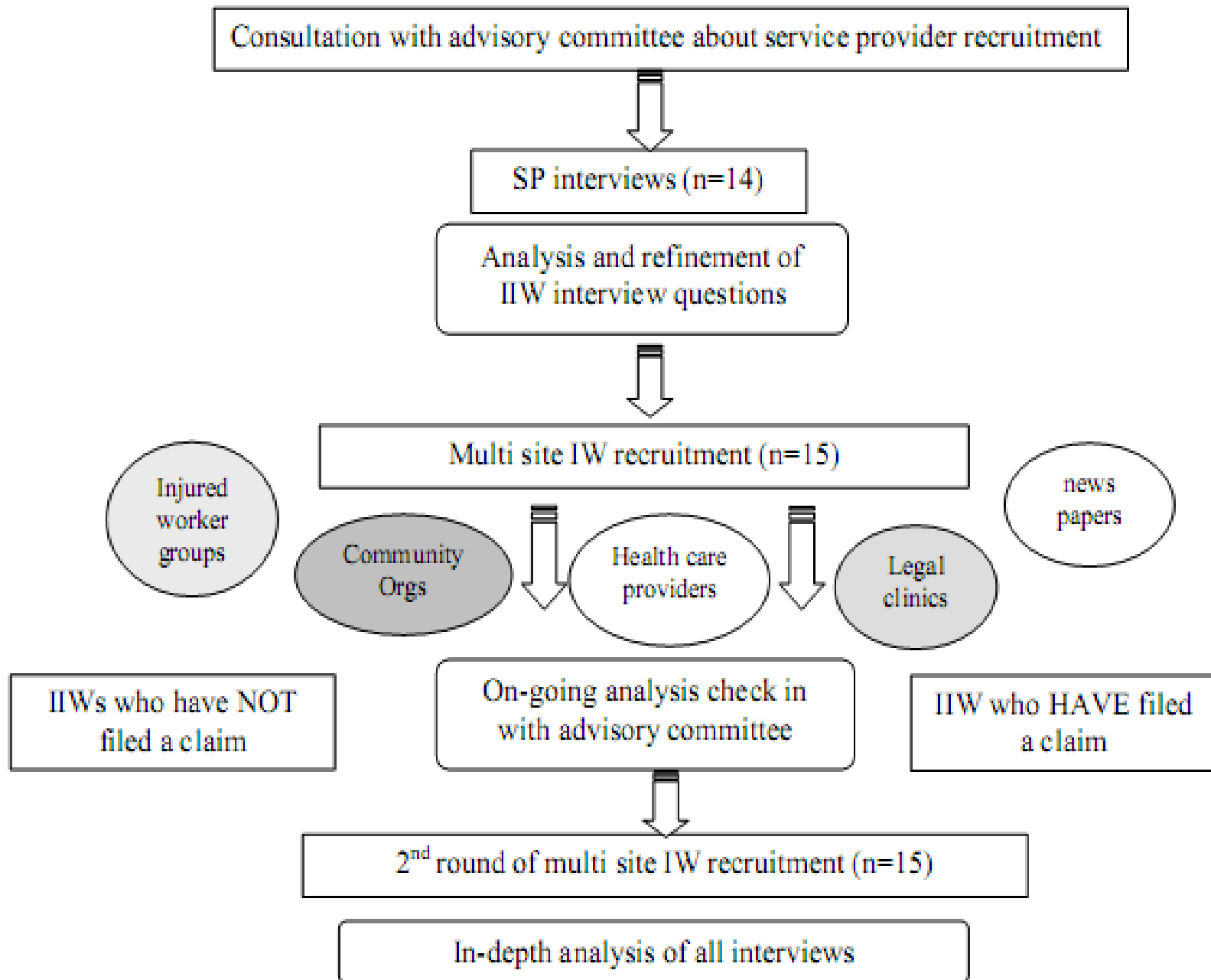


**Institute
for Work &
Health**

Research Excellence
Advancing Employee
Health

www.iwh.on.ca

Study map





Afternoon Plan

1. Service provider, community organization, settlement agency (Marni)

2. Government, policy (Peter)

3. Academic, researcher (Iggy)

4. Legal organization, union, trade council, association (Ellen)

- Suggested discussion questions provided (in package)
- Groups will be facilitated by IWH researchers who will take notes on flip charts.
- One person (selected by each group) will report back to larger group, summarizing main points (5 minutes max)
- We will collate all the responses and produce a “gaps and next steps” report which will go back to attendees of the forum for comment.
- This report can be used for planning, future program development and research design activities.



Discussion points for afternoon break out groups

- What do we already know? Where have we done enough research? Based on the presentations today what do you identify as the key issues affecting the working lives and health of immigrant workers and temporary foreign workers in BC? In Ontario? In Canada?
- Where can we act? How can we apply the research we have?
- Are there gaps in services, policy and practice that have been identified and need to be addressed? What are these gaps? How can they be addressed? What role can be played by researchers? Policy makers and government? Service providers? Prevention bodies and Unions? Others?



- Are there services, policies and practices that are working well? Why? Which ones? Where?
- What do we still need to know? Where do research gaps exist? What are the most pressing research questions?
- Who should act? Who is best situated to address these research questions? What methods should be used? Who should participate? What are the barriers that you face around participating in research? How can these barriers be overcome?
- Any other observations, thoughts, comments...



Wrap up – Next steps...

- Collate discussion from morning session and afternoon discussion
- Circulate report for comment and feedback
- Use this report to outline the most pressing research domains and areas requiring action/change identified at the forum
- Conduct several interviews with those who could not attend to get feedback on research, service, policy gaps etc.
- Begin networking and developing plans to collaborate with others who have similar research interests (may lead to the development of grant proposals, suggestions for policy briefs, program development ideas...etc.)



THANK YOU

- Marni for all her work in organizing the forum
- To all the attendees, especially to those who have travelled from away to be here and to the presenters
- To the note takers and reporters

**Please fill out the forum evaluation form
(in your package)!**



Agenda

8:30-9:00 - Coffee, snacks and Registration

9:00-9:30 – Introductory remarks/synopsis of ongoing research (A. Kosny)

9:30-10:00 – Presentation (P.Smith)

10:00-10:30- Presentation (M.Thompson)

10:30-11:00- Presentation (J. McLaughlin)

11:00-11:15- Break (Coffee, Tea, Snacks)

11:15- 11:45- Presentation (C. Gill)

11:45- 12:15 – Presentation (H. Zaman)

12:15- 12:45- Presentation (T.Bogyo)

12:45- 2:15- Group Lunch

2:15- 3:45 - Facilitated group discussion (Questions included in forum package)

3:45 -4:30– Reporting back from group discussion; Closing remarks, Forum Evaluation and networking