

Title: Workplace Safety & Insurance Board and WorkSafeBC lost-time injuries and income sources post-injury (IWH # 406/418)

Purpose:

The Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) and WorkSafeBC have the legislative mandate to provide wage-replacement compensation to Ontario and British Columbia labour-force participants respectively who experience an occupational injury. For a large majority of compensated injuries, the work disability is temporary. However, for approximately 10% of all injuries resulting in time loss from work, a permanent impairment is sustained. In this situation, the injured worker is eligible for compensation which is designed to provide labour market income replacement for the degree of partial or full work-disability they experienced. The extent to which temporary and permanent disability compensation adequately and equitably achieves the principle of justice embodied in this compensation program has remained controversial. This research project proposed to conduct an examination of the adequacy and equity of compensation awards for temporary and long-term disability beneficiaries as well as the post accident labour-market earnings and other income sources of these beneficiaries.

This project will use an innovative research design linking injury and compensation records, including benefits received, for samples of injured workers awarded temporary and long-term disability compensation by either the Ontario WSIB or WorkSafeBC to records of individual income tax filings reported to the federal government.

Description:

Samples of claimants receiving wage-replacement for temporary disability (1986, 1992 and 1998 date of accident for Ontario and 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002 date of accident for British Columbia) and samples of claimants receiving wage-replacement for permanent impairments (1986 to 1994 for Ontario and 1990 to 1994 for British Columbia) will be identified from the data holdings of the WSIB and WorkSafeBC. These data will include information about date of accident, level of disability, wage-replacement information and personal identifiers necessary for data linkage. These data will be encrypted and sent to Statistics Canada for linkage with the income tax filings. The income tax files will contribute comprehensive information on all income sources for each of the individuals in the study. The linkage and sampling of a comparison group will be performed by Statistics Canada's Small Area and Administrative Data Division. The record linkage will be deterministic in nature based on the Social Insurance Number. The linked records stripped of the identifying information will be maintained at Statistics Canada. The research team at IWH will conduct their analyses by preparing computer programs specifying the analyses they wish to conduct and then sending these programs to Statistics Canada where the programs will be run on the linked data. Aggregate results from these programs will then be sent back to the research team. At no time will the research team at IWH have access to or possession of the individual linked records. Only de-identified aggregate level data from Statistics Canada will be provided to the IWH researchers.

Output: Only aggregate data which do not identify any individuals are released from the analysis files through research papers or journal articles.

Ethical Review: The study proposal was originally reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto in April 2004 protocol number: 11515.