

Impact of an Aging Workforce on Workers' Compensation (WC) Claims

The enormous birth cohort born between 1946 and 1964 combined with the collapse of financial markets and an economic recession during the first decade of the 21st century have led to a larger population of older workers in the workplace. As older workers continue to push back retirement, it is going to become important to understand the health and safety realities of the aging workforce. The goal of the proposed project is to determine the impact that the aging process has on workers in the construction industry as age relates to selected workers' compensation variables. The specific aims of the study focus on investigating the relationship between age and cost (medical and indemnity) associated with occupational injuries and on describing the relationship between age and cause / nature of occupational injuries. The normal aging process leads to many physiological changes that make physically demanding work difficult and dangerous. Given the physical demands of construction work, the costs of injuries associated with an aging workforce can be significant. Thus, it is important to identify specific injury trends in order to develop best practices for older workers. A database of over 100,000 construction workers' compensation claims will be analyzed to determine the influence of age on cost (medical and indemnity), nature, and cause of injury. Correlations between age and all outcome variables of interest will be run and differences between age groups will be determined through t-tests and chi-square tests as appropriate. A linear regression analysis will be run to determine the relationship between age and costs associated with claims, while accounting for covariates of interest. Expected results include: differing costs, causes and natures of injuries between different age groups and an upward trend in claim costs with increasing age. Results from this study will increase our understanding of age related occupational injury trends that can be used to develop age friendly health and safety interventions. Pinnacle Assurance will provide the claims data for this study.