

**State of Connecticut Department of Public Health
Occupational Health Unit**

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Occupational Illness and Injury Surveillance in Connecticut; Major Outputs and Outcomes July, 2014-June, 2015

Analysis of Underreporting

Longitudinal analysis of occupational illness and injury under-reporting in Connecticut has successfully continued over the past year. Capture-recapture analysis is a comparison of data from the Occupational Illness and Injury Surveillance System (OISS) and the Connecticut Workers' Compensation Commission that is performed annually in order to estimate the amount of occupational disease underreporting that occurs in Connecticut. For 2013 data, a preliminary comparison of overlaps of reports to workers compensation and the OISS found 460 cases reported to both systems (28 lung, 163 MSD, 40 skin, 196 infectious and 33 other). This generates an unadjusted estimate of 19,693 unreported occupational illnesses (in addition to the 7,662 unique cases reported to at least one system) for a total estimate of 27,355 cases. This results in an estimate of only 20.4% of occupational illness cases being reported to Workers' Compensation, and 5.9% of cases reported to the OISS. Capture recapture data for 2014 will be completed over summer 2015 as the last 2014 cases are currently being entered.

Occupational Health Indicators

Our current funding has allowed Connecticut to complete analysis for all 22 *Occupational Health Indicators* for 2012. Connecticut adopted indicator 22 "Work-related Severe Traumatic Injury Hospitalizations" and included it in the summary report; this indicator is compiled using Connecticut inpatient hospitalization data. A summary data report of all compiled Connecticut indicators and profile demographic data was provided to NIOSH in June 2015. Connecticut continues to publish occupational health indicators data to the Connecticut Open Data Portal. Connecticut's Open Data Portal is part of the Connecticut Data Collaborative, a public-private effort to improve the quality and access to policy-related data in the state. New data will be published to the Open Data Portal annually which will allow easier accessibility of indicator data to public health stakeholders in Connecticut. The occupational Health Indicators can be viewed on the Connecticut Open Data Portal can be view at the following link.

<https://data.ct.gov/Health-and-Human-Services/Connecticut-Occupational-Health-Indicators/4s7n-ckr3>

The Occupational Health Unit continues to provide indicator data to the CT DPH Injury Program and provided the latest summary data in April 2015.

Targeted Conditions

Although not specifically funded as a specific aim, work-related asthma and heavy metal poisoning surveillance activities continued during the current year 2014. CT DPH received 132 mercury poisoning reports that were either ≥ 15 ug/L of whole blood or 35 ug/g creatinine in urine. Of those 132 reports received, 18 were at the Connecticut Department of Public Health's follow-up level which is ≥ 30 ug/L of whole blood or 70 ug/g creatinine in urine; no cases were determined to be work-related. In 2014, the CT DPH OISS received 20 work-related asthma reports. This was an increase of reports from 2013 where 8 reports were received. The Occupational Health unit continues to share asthma data from the OISS with the CT Asthma program each year in April. In addition, occupational asthma data was provided to our partners

at the University of Connecticut Health Center to examine changes in respiratory disease reports after hurricane Sandy.

Advisory Group

Collaborators at The University of Connecticut Department of Environmental and Occupational Medicine (DOEM), DPH, and the appointed members of the Connecticut Occupational Safety and Health Planning and Action Network (OSH-PLAN) advisory group, have continued to build on the initial goals previously outlined under this Specific Aim. Currently, CT DPH has utilized these findings and reestablished the Connecticut Occupational Health Clinics' meetings. These meetings have brought together occupational health providers and other stakeholders in Connecticut to discuss and present on current occupational health topics. Clinics' meetings have continued to be held quarterly by each of the funded Connecticut occupational medicine clinics, and have been generally successful and informative. The findings from the OSH-PLAN report provide topics for discussion that clinics can use to drive the meetings. At the February 27, 2015 meeting Yale presented "Safety in Numbers: An Update on Injuries and Safety Culture in Healthcare". The April 2015 meeting was held at Middlesex Hospital where the workgroup discussed HAZWOPER examinations. Most recently there was a meeting in June 2015 at Griffin Hospital Occupational Medicine Center that focused on workplace ergonomics. In addition, these meetings allow for CT DPH to provide feedback to reporting clinics on current issues that could impact reporting or patient care. The OSH-PLAN report was published to the CT DPH website for easier accessibility for OSH-PLAN stakeholders and partners in other states. The plan can be viewed on the CT DPH website http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/environmental_health/eoha/pdf/oshplanreport_finaledit_2_2.pdf.

Educational Activities

Currently the Occupational Health Unit continues to publish publications and provide trainings on important occupational health topics on an as-needed basis. In February 2015, a health alert publication was developed for Trichloroethylene (TCE) and its reproductive risks. This health alert was disseminated to the Manufacturing Alliance of Connecticut, the Connecticut Council on Occupational Safety and Health (ConnectiCOSH), the Connecticut Young Worker Health and Safety Team, and the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). Recently, the Occupational Health unit initiated an outreach and approached the CT DPH Family Health section about adding occupational health indicator and occupational disease data to a Connecticut Women's Health Report Card. The two programs worked together in early 2015 to finalize a template for the project. The report card is slated to be published in fall 2015.

Regional Collaboration

The 2015 Northeast Regional Surveillance meeting convened on May 4th and 5th. This annual meeting brings together all occupational health surveillance partners from throughout the Northeast States as well as federal partners from NIOSH to discuss various health topics of interest to our states. During the May meeting, Connecticut presented on Ebola experiences and preparing for the next workplace infectious disease crisis, on the role of occupational health programs in Public Health Accreditation (PHAB) and Quality Improvement (QI) initiatives, and also organized a session on the implications of recreational legalization of marijuana in the Northeast states and the potential effects on worker health and safety for producers and consumers.