

SAND abstract No. 80 from the BEACH program 2004–05

Subject: Employment status and workers compensation claims in general practice patients

Organisation supporting this study: Australian General Practice Statistics and Classification Centre on behalf of the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission.

Issues: Types of problems managed for patients aged 15 years and over from different workforce categories and industries; work-related problems; workers' compensation claim status of work-related problems; reasons for not claiming workers' compensation for work-related problems.

Sample: 5,513 respondents aged 15 years and over from 211 GPs; data collection period: 18/01/2005–28/03/2005.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2004–05' on this website: http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm.

Summary of results

The age–sex distribution of patients was the same as the average BEACH results for 2003–2004, with the majority (57.4%) being female. Employment data were recorded for 5,486 patients aged 15 years and over, and 41.5% (95% CI: 38.9–44.2) of them were employed or self-employed.

Of the 2,205 currently employed or self-employed patients who answered the question on industry of employment, 19.1% (95% CI: 17.2–21.1) worked in health and community services, 11.1% (95% CI: 8.7–13.4) worked in manufacturing and 10.1% (95% CI: 8.6–11.6) were in the retail trade.

A total of 3,095 problems were managed for the employed/self-employed patients, most commonly skin or musculoskeletal problems which together made up about one quarter of these problems. Musculoskeletal problems were the most common problems managed for patients working in the manufacturing, transport, construction and recreational services industries, while skin problems were most common for those in health and community services and the retail industry. Respiratory problems were the most common for government, defence and education workers.

There were 235 work-related problems managed, accounting for 5.7% of the total. Almost one third of skin injuries managed for these patients were work-related as were almost 30.0% of back complaints and sprains/strains. One quarter of fractures and acute stress reactions managed for these patients were work-related.

Of the 235 work-related problems, almost 70.0% were managed at workers' compensation claimable encounters. The most common of these problems was back complaint, followed by sprain/strain. At encounters not covered by workers' compensation, the most common work-related problem managed was complete medical examination, followed by acute stress reaction.

For the 67 problems that were managed at encounters where a workers' compensation claim was not made, GPs recorded 37 reasons for not claiming. Most frequently the reason given was "not serious enough". Less frequently the reason was that the patient was self-employed.

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PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about **WORK RELATED CONDITIONS**.
 You may tear out this page as a guide to completing the following section of forms.

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask **ALL** of the **next 30 PATIENTS** the following questions **in the order in which the patients are seen**.

Please **DO NOT** select patients to suit the topic being investigated.

Patient employment status

Ask all patients 15 years of age and over, how they would **describe** their **current employment status**.

Include part-time and casual employment.

Select **ONE** category only.

Industry of employment

Please **give the patient the Industry of employment card from your research kit** and ask them to advise the **industry** in which they are **currently employed** (either self-employed or employed by another). Use the tick boxes to indicate the patient's response.

For industries **not** on the tick box list, select a number from this list → and **write it in the box labelled 'other'**.

1 - 5 are listed in the section below

- 6. Mining
- 7. Electricity, Gas & Water Supply
- 8. Wholesale Trade
- 9. Retail Trade
- 10. Accommodation, Cafes & Restaurants
- 11. Communication Services
- 12. Finance & Insurance
- 13. Property & Business Services
- 14. Government Administration & Defence
- 15. Education
- 16. Cultural & Recreational Services
- 17. Personal & Other Services

Workers' compensation claims

If the patient had a **work-related problem** managed at today's encounter but has **NOT made** or **WILL NOT make** a **workers' compensation claim** for that problem, please advise the **reason for not claiming**.

What is this patient's current employment status?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee | <input type="checkbox"/> Student (not employed) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student and employed | <input type="checkbox"/> Not working due to health problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home duties | |
- (please specify)*

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If currently employed or self-employed, in what industry is the patient mainly working?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Health & Community Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Transport and Storage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Construction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other <i>(please enter number from card)</i> |

If no workers' compensation claim was made for a work related condition managed today, what was the reason for **not** claiming?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Not serious enough |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Self-employed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Covered by other means (eg employer paid) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Didn't know I could claim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ |
- (please specify)*

Industry of employment

1. Manufacturing
2. Health & community services
3. Transport & storage
4. Construction
5. Agriculture
6. Mining
7. Electricity, gas & water supply
8. Wholesale trade
9. Retail trade
10. Accommodation, cafes & restaurants
11. Communication services
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