

RESEARCH REVIEW

Keeping you up to date with the latest peer-reviewed research on workforce health and productivity

[NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE >](#)



May 12, 2020

In this issue:

- [Work Environment Influences Risk of Depression and Decreased Job Performance](#)
- [Non-Fatal Injuries Cost Nearly \\$1,600 and 11 Lost Workdays Per Employee Each Year](#)
- [CDC Report Reveals Higher Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19 in People with Underlying Health Conditions](#)
- [More Exposure to Air Pollution Increases Risk of COVID-19 Death](#)
- [Nonworking and Physically Active People More Susceptible to Wellness Issues During COVID-19 Quarantine](#)
- [Pandemics Depress the Economy, Public Health Interventions Do Not: Evidence from the 1918 Flu](#)

Work Environment Influences Risk of Depression and Decreased Job Performance

[*Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*](#)

Results from a study on Canadian workers found that job insecurity, psychological demands, and irregular work schedule were associated with increased depression, and thus, indirectly related to decreased job performance. However, decision authority, job promotion, recognition, and skill utilization were related to increased job performance. Suggested implications for employers to mitigate negative effects of work environment include communicating and being transparent about the company's financial situation, involving employees in decision-making, restructuring tasks to highlight employees' strengths, allowing flexible work schedules, and recognizing

employee achievements.

+ Business Impact of Depression: IBI's past analytics [report](#) modeled the cost for a disability claim for depression/mood disorder and found that it costs an average of \$11,100 and is almost twice as costly as non-mental health claims. Additional research conducted by IBI on the [business impact of depression](#) covers topics such as healthcare costs, lost productivity, the impacts of climate change, and the benefits of medication adherence.

+ Mental Health Consequences of Long-Term Social Distancing: [Latest IBI Blog](#) discusses considerations for employers to support employee mental health as social distancing continues. Discussion includes mental health consequences, suggested interventions, and more.

Non-Fatal Injuries Cost Nearly \$1,600 and 11 Lost Workdays Per Employee Each Year

[Injury Prevention—BMJ](#)

In a sample of U.S. workers with employer-sponsored health insurance, non-fatal injuries treated in emergency departments (ED) were associated with 11 additional lost workdays when compared to workers with no ED-treated injuries, costing nearly \$1,600 in lost productivity. Motorcycle injuries were the costliest cause of injury, at an average of 44 excess lost workdays and \$6,200 in lost productivity. Traumatic brain injuries were the most serious type of injury, with an average of 20 excess lost workdays and \$2,800 in lost productivity.

+ Injuries Hurt Disability Plan Sponsors' Pockets: According to claims in IBI's [Disability and Leave Benchmarking](#) system, one in eight short-term disability (STD) claims are for injuries, making it the third most common cause after pregnancy and musculoskeletal diseases.

CDC Report Reveals Higher Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19 in People with Underlying Health Conditions

[Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

Patients with diabetes, chronic lung disease, or heart disease were at higher risk for severe respiratory infection with COVID-19. Medical histories were documented for 7,162 (5.8%) COVID-19 cases in the U.S., which determined that underlying health conditions or risk factors for severe respiratory infection were present in more than 1 in 3 patients and accounted for 71% of hospitalizations, 78% of ICU admissions, and

94% of deaths.

More Exposure to Air Pollution Increases Risk of COVID-19 Death

[Harvard T.H Chan School of Public Health](#)

Long term exposure to particulate matter—a measure of pollution in the air—is responsible for 5.5 million premature deaths per year globally. Researchers found that each increase in particulate matter of 1 microgram per cubic meter of air is responsible for an 8% increase in mortality from COVID-19 in the U.S., even after adjusting for socioeconomic, demographic, weather, behavioral and healthcare factors.

+ Rollback of Air Pollution Regulations: As [reported](#) recently, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is [relaxing some air pollution enforcement and compliance regulations](#) in response to COVID-19. Considering the results of the Harvard study, employers may wish to review and refine [policies](#) to address air quality safety and pollution in the workplace as shelter-in-place orders are relaxed.

+ Climate Change will Make Matters Worse: IBI's analysis of [climate-impacted disability diagnoses](#) noted that air pollution is a factor in cardiovascular and respiratory conditions. Collectively, these climate-impacted health conditions account for about 7% of employers' short-term disability claims.

Nonworking and Physically Active People More Susceptible to Wellness Issues During COVID-19 Quarantine

[Psychiatry Research](#)

Researchers found that adults in China who did not work during a one month COVID-19 confinement period reported worse health, especially in the areas of mental health and distress, than adults who worked in the office or at home during that time. In addition, adults who regularly exercised on average 2.5 hours per day during the quarantine reported worse life satisfaction than their more sedentary counterparts.

Pandemics Depress the Economy, Public Health Interventions Do Not: Evidence from the 1918 Flu

[Social Science Research Network \(SSRN\)](#)

While non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI) for pandemics (such as social distancing and business closures) may have economic costs in the short-term, researchers at the Federal Reserve and MIT find that these policies provide both public health benefits as well as economic benefits after the pandemic subsides. U.S. cities that implemented NPIs earlier and more aggressively during the 1918 Flu Pandemic were found to have lower mortality rates and greater economic growth after the pandemic ended. Reacting 10 days earlier to a pandemic outbreak increased subsequent manufacturing employment by 5%, while keeping NPIs in place for an additional 50 days increased manufacturing employment by 6.5%.

+ Learning from the Past to Respond to the Present Pandemic: [The 1918 influenza pandemic's](#) negative impact on global production and consumption highlights the importance of ensuring employees—the main drivers of business growth and success— have access to the [support they need during crises](#) so that they are able to continue to uphold operational demands in the wake of emergencies.



IBI is the leading not-for-profit organization focused on the connections among workforce health, wellbeing, medical care, absence and productivity. We provide research, benchmarking, education and the tools to help guide sound decisions in workforce health investments. For more information, please visit www.ibiweb.org.

Upcoming Events

TODAY, May 12: [Webinar: Building a Culture of Health in the Workplace... and what this means in the age of COVID-19](#)

May 20: [Webinar: New Tool & Model for Estimating COVID-19 Employee Cases & Leave Costs by State and Metro Area](#)

September 14-15: [Conference: IBI/Conference Board Health and Productivity Forum](#)

