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COULD WORKERS COMPENSATION DATA BE USED FOR EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE OF OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES IN FRANCE?

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Objectives Financial compensation for workplace accidents are paid by several funds in France. The advantage of these data is that each fund determines if the accident was work-related. But funds function independently and there have been no efforts to centralise them.

Methods The study focused on workplace accidents occurring in 2004–05 and compensated by the three main funds, covering 84% of all French employees. We used four indicators: the number of accidents, incidence rate, proportion of severe accidents (90 days or more days off) and proportion of multi-injured employees, calculated for each sex by age, economic sector and cause of accident. It was necessary to harmonise the nomenclatures of the three funds for economic sector and cause of accident.

Results The annual number of occupational injuries was estimated at 915 000 for men and 370 000 for women. A decrease with age of the number of injuries, the incidence rate and the proportion of multi-injured employees was observed for both sexes. The proportion of severe injuries increased with age. For three economic sectors (construction, business services and trade), the number of accidents exceeded 100 000 among men. The three sectors with the highest incidence rates were construction, transport and agricultural and food industries. Among women, the highest number of accidents was observed in health and social work, the highest risk in agricultural and food industries, health-and-social-work and services to individuals.

Conclusions Despite data limitations, it was possible to calculate previously unknown national indicators of non-fatal workplace accidents.