

33 WORK-RELATED ACCIDENTS, INJURIES AND ILLNESSES IN MIGRANT WORKERS IN AUSTRALIA AND DURATION OF RESIDENCE

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Objectives The international literature suggests that migrant workers have more work-related accidents and injuries than native-born workers. The evidence for Australia is patchy despite the fact that one in four Australians were born abroad. The aim of this study was to examine if migrant workers have more work-related accidents, injuries and illnesses (AII) than native-born workers and if any difference varied by duration of residence.

Methods The Multi Purpose Household Study was conducted in 2005–6 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Information on work-related AII that occurred in the past year and working conditions was collected from a representative sample of the Australian population. Country of birth and period of arrival was also collected.

Results 29 235 people participated in the survey and 18 285 were active in the labour force. Of these 4427 (24%) were born outside of Australia. There were 1230 AII, 266 among migrants (57% male, mean age 39 years). Workers from the Americas (10%), Oceania (9%) and Philippines (8%) had the most AII. The risk of AII did not differ between newer migrants, migrants who arrived earlier or Australian-born workers ($p=0.111$). However, within-industry examination showed that newer migrants (arriving after 2001) had more AII working in the service industry (55.6% vs 39%) and accommodation, restaurants and cafes (18.5% vs 4.6%) compared with Australian-born workers ($p=0.002$).

Conclusions Newer migrants to Australia tend to work in jobs where the inherent risk of AII is low. Some sectors of the workplace are more hazardous for migrant workers than Australian-born workers.