

## **Non-fatal Occupational Injuries Requiring Admission to Hospitals in Al-Khobar City, Saudi Arabia: Prospective Cohort Study**

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**Aim.** To determine the incidence rate of non-fatal occupational injuries among the workers insured by the General Organization of Social Insurance requiring admission to private hospitals in Al-Khobar city during 1995.

**Methods.** This cohort study was conducted on 65,915 insured industry workers admitted to 2 randomly selected private hospitals in Al-Khobar City. At the admission to the hospital, a data sheet was filled out with necessary data collected from the patient directly and from his medical file.

**Results.** The injury incidence rate was 7.1 per 1,000 full-time workers a year. Nationality-wise, 1.5% were Saudis, 13.2% were Filipinos, and 74.8% were from the Indian subcontinent. Hands and fingers were most often injured (32.1%) and fall was the main cause of injury (33.4%). The majority of admissions (77.8%) lasted for less than a week. Absence from work was longer than 3 weeks in 35.5%, and shorter than 1 week in 24.9% of admissions. Majority of the injured workers (65.0%) visited the clinic 2–7 times. Direct medical cost per admission was less than US\$533 (SR2,000) in 63.9% of the cases in one of the hospitals.

**Conclusions.** The incidence rate of work injuries in Saudi Arabian workers was comparable to the rates from other countries. As these injuries cause high medical charges, human suffering, and loss of productivity, it seems that the social insurance organization should take measures to improve the current situation and encourage similar studies to be conducted in this field, particularly on severe injuries.

**Key words:** *costs, direct service; hand injuries; hospital costs; hospitalization; injuries, poisoning and occupational diseases; insurance, health; occupational health; Saudi Arabia; workplace*

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