

Epidemiology of Work-Related Upper Extremity Disorders: Understanding Prevalence and Outcomes to Impact Provider Performances Using Practice Management Reporting Tool

Abstract

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2001 the number of “repeated trauma” cases accounted for 4% of total workplace injuries and 65% of all occupational illnesses, with work-related upper extremity disorders (WRUEDs) accounting for the majority of these. Correspondingly, total medical and indemnity expenses associated with these injuries were 80% higher than the average of all other claims. Due to the fact that chronic disability leads to the highest cost, systematic evaluation of this growing occupational condition is needed. The intent of this chapter is to shed light on the WRUEDs population by understanding the prevalence and pattern for these diagnoses, its impact on outcomes influenced by age, gender and geography on metrics such as utilization, duration, disability status and costs. To assess these types of outcomes measurements a good reporting and management system must be in place to allow for ongoing evaluation and analysis of this data and in the construction of intervention programs to improve provider performances and ultimately patients’ outcomes.