

Work-connected interventions for people with psychological injuries

The report outlines the published evidence on current practices in the management of people with claims for psychological injury, including a description of the effectiveness of work-connected interventions for people with psychological injury.

TYPE OF PROJECT

Literature Review

AIM OF THE PROJECT

To identify and document opportunities to prevent and effectively manage psychological injury claims, and to support the recovery and return to work of people with psychological injury claims, in the NSW CTP and workers' compensation schemes.

PUBLICATION DETAILS

Research report prepared by the Insurance Work and Health Group in the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University and the University of Sydney, May 2020.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- NSW Fire and Rescue
- Australian Rehabilitation Providers Association
- Resilia
- EML
- Monash University
- NSW Ministry of Health
- Sydney University
- Superfriend
- Westpac
- Woolworths

Background



- There is a national growing trend in incidence and duration of workers compensation psychological injury claims.
- For example, in NSW there has been 22% growth in psychological injury claims from calendar year 2018 to calendar year 2019, representing 7.5% of all claims lodged
- Increased prevalence of co-morbid or secondary mental health conditions among the physically injured *
- 38% of people making claims for musculoskeletal conditions reported moderate or severe psychological distress with < 25% reported receiving mental healthcare**
- substantial evidence that people making psychological injury claims take, much longer on average to RTW, have slower recovery trajectories, report poorer claims experiences, and, have more costly claims.

Results



- Stakeholder interviews identified high level principles including emphasis on:
- individualised approach
 - training for managers and colleagues on mental health literacy in workplaces
 - use of framework to manage psychological injury
- Rapid meta-review identified 68 relevant studies and found the evidence:
- does not clearly identify effective workplace-connected interventions for psychological injury
 - moderately support psychological intervention in the treatment of non-traumatic stress
- Search of grey literature found
- documents generally describe high level principles
 - useful resources are available for employers based on these principles
 - evaluation of programs/intervention is rare and very few clear recommendations for practice

Discussion



- High level themes identified by stakeholders are closely aligned to the principles outlined in comprehensive strategy documents identified in grey literature
- The need for an individualised approach to the management of psychological injuries is a common theme
- Review suggests stakeholders were familiar with current evidence
- Evaluation of interventions was limited with few clear recommendations for practice identified
- A greater emphasis on evaluation and communication of findings is essential to improve future management of psychological injuries in workplaces

Recommendations



- In this review, the common theme identified from the stakeholder interviews and the grey literature (government and industry reports) is the need for an individualised approach to the management of psychological injuries. This will require a tailored plan for each individual, along with high level of skill of those managing the injury.
- Future research for the next project will aim at identifying the following interventions with managing psychological injuries: 1) the interventions most commonly applied in practice; 2) industry stakeholders' priority areas for change; and 3) the key challenges for implementing different approaches for the management of psychological injuries.