

### Study 3: how does mental health change over time in relation to work injury?

Study 1 helped clarify that there is a discernible linkage between workplace injury and mental health issues. It also showed that there are discrete risk factors, such as visible minority status, that may influence this connection. In Study 2, the ways that psychological distress impacts work injury, and that work injury leads to depression, were unpacked. Study 3 seeks to show how time might change the dynamics of the relationships identified by the first two studies, specifically among young workers and over a short period of time (in months).

The links between mental health and work injury amongst younger workers has not been studied in any depth. Existing research from 1998 to 2011 is thin and contradictory. The team sought to rectify this by re-examining data from a WCB Manitoba-funded longitudinal study (Tucker & Turner, 2017) of 162 workers aged 15 to 19 who completed monthly surveys for up to 15 months in a row. Tucker and Turner (2017) asked questions about work-related injuries, mental health, and other aspects of young workers' work and non-work lives, such as safety attitudes and beliefs.

The team's analysis revealed that young workers may have different levels of mental health at different times but the overall change in mental health over five months is consistent between injured and non-injured participants. It was notable that a worker who experienced an injury also experienced worse mental health at that time and one-month post-injury. But experiencing a work injury did not affect the overall trend of mental health over five months, and the trend of mental health did not affect the experience of work injury at the end of the study.

The analysis re-emphasized the need to discover why young workers have such frequent experience of injury and how periods of unemployment might impact mental health problems.