

WTC attacks increase subsequent firefighter retirements

August 12 2011

A new study published in the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* reveals that the WTC attacks affected the health of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) resulting in more post-9/11 retirements than expected.

Led by David J. Prezant, MD, Chief Medical Officer, FDNY, researchers assessed a total of 7,763 retired [firefighters](#) between September 11, 1994, and September 10, 2008, comparing the total number of retirements and the number and proportion of accidental disability retirements 7 years before and 7 years after the WTC attack.

Results found that in the 7 years before 9/11, there were 3,261 retirements, 48% (1,571) of which were disability retirements. In the 7 years after 9/11, there were 4,502 retirements, 66% (2,970) were disability retirements, of which 47% (1,402) were associated with WTC-related injuries or illnesses. After 9/11, the increase in disability retirements was, for the most part, due to respiratory-related illnesses and resulted in approximately 10% of the workforce having to retire.

Pension benefits associated with WTC-related disability retirements have produced an increased [financial burden](#) of over \$826 million on the FDNY pension system.

"It is clear that the WTC attack has had an enormous impact on the health of the FDNY [workforce](#) and, as a consequence, its pension system," Prezant concludes. "Human suffering cannot be measured in

dollars alone but does serve as a reminder that recovery efforts, when rescue is no longer possible, should be carried out with special attention to the preservation of health for the responders."

Provided by Wiley

Citation: WTC attacks increase subsequent firefighter retirements (2011, August 12) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-08-wtc-subsequent-firefighter.html>

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