

# Older women more prone to workplace injuries: study

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(Medical Xpress) -- Although the rate of workplace injuries in Canada has been declining over the past two decades, some workers – older women in health care, for example – are much more vulnerable to serious injuries, researchers at the University of British Columbia have found.

Women 55 to 64 years old are three times more likely to experience a severe fall than [women](#) 15 to 24 years old, according to the article, published in the online journal *PLoS ONE*. In addition, women working in health care are three to four times more likely to incur a serious injury as men in that field.

The researchers analyzed data on serious workplace injuries from 2002 and 2008 maintained by WorkSafeBC, British Columbia's workers' compensation board. Serious injuries result in more severe medical diagnoses, longer periods of disability, and higher compensation claim costs, and thus are key targets for injury prevention initiatives.

“These findings provide a much clearer picture of the substantial burden of serious injuries among workers,” says Jonathan Fan, a researcher at UBC's Partnership for Work, Health and Safety and first author on the study. “As [Canada](#)'s workforce continues to grow older, a key issue will be the development of effective interventions to keep workplaces safe for older workers.”

“It may mean modifying the work environment to make it safer, just as

people do in non-work environments,” adds Chris McLeod, a post-doctoral fellow in the School of Population and Public Health and supervisor of the study. “This is something that employers need to be aware of.”

“This research provides insight on where to focus occupational [health](#) and safety policy,” says Kevin La Freniere, Vice President of Marketing at WorkSafeBC.

**More information:** The full paper can be accessed at [dx.plos.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0038750](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0038750) .

Provided by University of British Columbia

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