

# Study finds depression and fatigue increase women's risk of work-related injuries

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Women who suffer from depression, anxiety, and fatigue are more likely to be injured at work, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* led by researchers from the Colorado School of Public Health's Center for Health, Work & Environment on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. The study found that these health factors significantly affected women's risk of injury but not men's risk.

"The findings of our study demonstrate that keeping workers safe requires more than your typical safety program. It requires an integrated approach that connects health, well-being, and safety," said Dr. Natalie Schwatka, the study's lead author and assistant professor in the ColoradoSPH's Center for Health, Work & Environment and Department of Environmental and Occupational Health.

The authors collaborated with Colorado's largest workers' compensation insurer, Pinnacol Assurance, to examine the claims data of 314 businesses from a range of industries. Close to 17,000 employees ranging from executives to laborers were represented in the study. The researchers found that men were more likely to sustain a work-related injury but [behavioral health](#) factors, like poor sleep and anxiety, did not directly affect their risk of injury. Women were more likely to report experiencing mental and behavioral health issues and these conditions increased their risk of getting hurt on the job. Almost 60% of women with a work injury reported experiencing a behavioral health condition before they were injured, compared to 33% of men.

Yet, Dr. Schwatka cautions that further research is needed to understand why there are differences in women's and men's risk of work-related injuries. Overall, workers who had an injury in the past were more likely to be injured again, regardless of their gender.

"There a number of social and cultural factors that may explain why women reported having more behavioral health concerns than men did. Men generally admit to fewer health concerns," said Dr. Schwatka. "And [women](#) may face different stresses at work and at home. It's something that is worth exploring in future research."

**More information:** Natalie V. Schwatka et al. Reoccurring Injury, Chronic Health Conditions, and Behavioral Health, *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* (2018). [DOI: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000001301](#)

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