

Abstract

Feasibility of using intermediary organizations to disseminate interventions to improve construction workers' health and well-being: A total worker health approach

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background and objectives

In addition to high risks of work-related injuries and fatalities, construction workers have high rates of other health risks, including substance use and suicide. Most construction employers are small and lack resources to improve worker health. We assessed the feasibility of using intermediary organizations to disseminate interventions to improve the health and well-being of construction workers.

methods

We conducted focus groups and interviews with regional construction contractors, trade unions, and apprenticeship programs to identify current workplace programs, policies, and practices affecting worker health and well-being, and to prioritize areas for intervention. We also assessed each organization's interest in serving as an intermediary for disseminating health interventions to workers.

results

Few employers had formal programs addressing worker health and well-being beyond traditional workplace safety; many felt that workplace policies should not address "personal behaviors" such as smoking. Suicide prevention and opioid use were identified as the high priorities for intervention by all groups. Our academic team provided content, logistical support, and consultation to these intermediaries to develop and deploy new educational and awareness programs around suicide and opioid use. To date, the regional contractors' association implemented a week-long suicide prevention and awareness campaign. Two union health funds have created media plans and run stories in their newsletters about suicide and opioid use. Another union will provide opioid use prevention training for all new apprentices. Further interventions are planned. Evaluation of these programs is ongoing, including the reach and uptake of awareness efforts and changes in knowledge and attitudes.

conclusions

Partnerships with trusted intermediary organizations can be an effective way to disseminate health information to high-risk worker groups. Intervention topics must align with the priorities of the intermediaries. Implementing education and awareness programs around health behaviors was more acceptable to intermediaries than changing workplace policies and practices.

Conduct evaluation related to programs, research, and other areas of practice
Implementation of health education strategies, interventions and programs
Occupational health and safety
Other professions or practice related to public health
Public health or related organizational policy, standards, or other guidelines
Public health or related research

