Oral Communication
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People With Spinal Cord Injury in the Labour Market: A Global Comparative Outlook

Topic: Labor Market and Participation

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BACKGROUND

The disparity in the employment of people with and without disability is evident in highly developed economies. We have limited knowledge of the disparity when compared to middle to low-income countries. A recent study supported the facilitative role of employment on the health and quality of life of people with SCI depending on the resources available in each country. The first data collection of the International SCI Community Study (InSCI) occurred in 2017. Follow-up data from 2023-2024 will allow us to revisit the status of labor market participation of people with SCI.

We aim to explore the relationship between age, gender, education, occupation, cause of injury (traumatic *vs.* non-traumatic), SCI characteristics (tetraplegia, paraplegia; complete, incomplete), self-perceived capacity to work, and employment status. Working hours post-SCI, work recognition, and adequacy of salary will also be described and together with job type will add to sociodemographic classification and provide a socioeconomic job status construct.

METHODS

This study is an observational cohort study within a community-based setting. People who met the study criteria were invited to participate in the study (InSCI). Data from participants of typical working age (18-65) were included. Descriptive statistics/frequency distribution will be used to describe the population and employment across different participant groups (gender, education, occupation, work hours, etiology of SCI, level/extent of injury, receipt of vocational rehabilitation, self-capacity to work, adequacy of salary, and work recognition). We used a hierarchical regression with a combination of fixed and random effects to address the impact of each variable on employment while controlling for country of origin and/or covariates.

RESULTS

Data were available for 31 countries (n = 15,051). Seventy percent were males with a mean age of 52.5 years old (SD = 16). Most of the respondents were in urban areas (57%), 50% were married, mean total years of education of 11.6 while only 1.4 years of education after SCI. Most had paraplegia (64%), incomplete injury (60%), and traumatic SCI (79%). Over 50% did not work after their initial rehabilitation, while only 28% had vocational rehabilitation. Results from the regression analysis are pending but are expected to be presented at the conference.

CONCLUSION

This study offered a comparative view of the lived experience and employment of people with SCI including those from low-, middle-, and high-income countries. This will provide insight into the lived experience of people with SCI across countries and inform employment policies, determinants of employment, and effective vocational rehabilitation.

Statement of Disclosures

None

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