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Near Miss and Minor Occupational Injury: Does It Share a Common Causal Pathway with Major Injury?

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BACKGROUND: An essential assumption of injury prevention programs is the common cause hypothesis that the causal pathways of near misses and minor injuries are similar to those of major injuries.

METHODS: The injury rates for all reported near miss, minor injury and major injury events and musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs) were calculated for three health regions using information from a standardized operational database and the number of productive hours from payroll data. The relative distribution of individual causes and activities involved in the events were compared across the 3 outcome categories.

RESULTS: In general, the relative distribution of causes and activities involved in minor and major MSIs were similar. For all reported events there was a greater number of significant differences in the relative distribution of causes compared with MSIs only. The top causes and activities involved were the same across the 3 outcome categories.

CONCLUSIONS: The majority of near miss, minor injury and major injury events had similar causal factors when limited to a singular nature and can potentially be used as outcome measures for injury prevention programs.