



Introduction & Method

The aim of this exploratory project was to examine young workers' experiences at work in relation to health and safety. Data have shown that young workers have the second highest rate of work-related injury claims in New Zealand. However, no research has been carried out to find out the young worker's experience in Aotearoa. A 34-question online survey was developed and piloted and participants were recruited through Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Safeguard Magazine and onsite posters at Victoria University. Ethical clearance was obtained from Victoria University of Wellington. In total, 108 people responded to the survey resulting in 107 usable responses. The participants were mostly female (68.2%), aged between 16 and 24 years and the majority New Zealand Pakeha (61.3%), Asian (23.4%) and Māori (9%).

Conclusions

The results identified that approximately one third of respondents had received no health and safety training when starting work with just under 50% of respondents reporting that the training had made them feel more confident. While 57% of participants felt that health and safety was valued by their employer, the reason for this was they had respected communication with their employer or supervisor. Sixty-three percent of participants said that they were confident to speak up about a health and safety issue, but this was as a result of open communication with employers and having established reporting systems. Conversely when asked what would stop them speaking up about an issue the most common response was the perceived insignificance of the issue. While some respondents were aware of safety measures, a majority had seen an increase since the onset of the pandemic including the use of PPE, social distancing and increased sanitation. In response to questions about stress at work, half of respondents reported higher levels. Sources of stress included balancing work and other priorities, lack of sleep and unclear instructions. Participants also made some recommendations on future training that included clear and open communication, improved health and safety resources and continuous and in-depth training. In conclusion this research study has identified the importance of improved health and safety training for all young workers, better communication in the workplace and building confidence in young workers, managing risks and reducing hazards for young workers and strengthening health and safety at work.

An exploratory study on the effects of **training, confidence & stress** on vulnerability to work-related harm

Key findings



How to keep young workers healthier and safer at work

Improve and provide tailored health and safety training for younger workers

Create open communication and build confidence and agency in young workers

Identify and control risk factors that impact on young workers' health and safety

Strengthen how health and safety is enacted in the workplace