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The reported incidence of work-related ill-health in Scotland (2002–2003)

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Background Although incidence data for work-related ill-health
 in the UK are available, more detailed information for smaller
 geographical areas has hitherto been unpublished.

Aims To estimate the incidence of work-related ill-health reported by clinical specialists in Scotland,
 2002–2003.

Methods THOR (The Health and Occupation Reporting network) is a UK wide reporting scheme for
 work-related ill-health. In 2002–2003, 241 out of 2162 physicians in THOR were based in Scotland. We
 have summarized the reported cases and calculated incidence rates for categories of ill-health by age,
 gender and industry. The UK Labour Force Survey (2002) was used to provide denominator data, with
 comparisons made between rates for Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Results In 2002–2003, 4043 estimated cases were reported from Scotland. Mental ill-health was most
 frequently reported (41%); followed by musculoskeletal disorders (31%), skin disorders (16%),
 respiratory disease (10%), hearing disorders (2%) and infection (1%). The reported average annual
 incidence rate per 100 000 employees for all work-related ill-health in Scotland was 86.0. The highest
 reported rate for mental ill-health was found for employees in public administration and defence (76.7
 per 100 000), and health and social work (72.3 per 100 000). The construction industry had the highest
 reported rate of musculoskeletal disorders (41.6 per 100 000), while hairdressers appeared at most risk of
 developing occupational contact dermatitis (rate=86.4 per 100 000).

Conclusions Despite its limitations, THOR has indicated types of work-related ill-health and related
 industries for targeted disease prevention in Scotland.

Keywords Disease reporting; epidemiology; incidence; industry; occupational; physician;

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