



Research Brief

Characteristics associated with perceived underemployment among participants with spinal cord injury with spinal cord injury: a prospective cohort study

Introduction

The objective to identify job characteristics related to perceived underemployment among people with spinal cord injury (SCI), while controlling for demographic, injury, and educational factors.

Key Findings

- Just under one-quarter of participants perceived themselves to be underemployed (24.6%)
- Most participants were working full time (62.8%), and only 39.8% earned \$50,000 or more per year
- A somewhat smaller percentage of participants (59%) reported having health benefits from their jobs
- Even fewer participants had received promotions (34.4%) or recognition (22.3%).
- The occupations with the highest portion of participants were management/professional (39.1%), followed by sales (28.8), with the fewest participants working in production, transportation, and materials movement (7.0%)
- Underemployment was significantly lower for women, those who were either married or in a nonmarried couple, and those with health benefits
- Underemployment was higher for those with lower earnings and occupations in the category of sales and professional/managerial.
- Postsecondary educational milestones, having received a promotion or recognition, and working full time were significantly related to a lower likelihood of underemployment
- Age, years since injury, and injury severity were not significant indicator for underemployment

What does this mean?

Underemployment is a concern among people with SCI and is more prevalent in low-paying jobs, without benefits, and opportunities for recognition and promotion. Underemployment is an important indicator of quality employment after SCI and is related to earnings level and other indicators of job quality, including the provision of fringe benefits and having opportunities for recognition and promotion. Vocational counseling strategies need to promote quality employment, including jobs with recognition and benefits.

Full publication link: [Underemployment among participants with SCI](#)