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Occupational heat-related illness emergency department visits and inpatient hospitalizations in the southeast region, 2007-2011.

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BACKGROUND: Heat-related illness (HRI) is an occupational health risk for many outdoor, and some indoor, workers.
METHODS: Emergency department (ED) and inpatient hospitalization (IH) data for 2007-2011 from nine southeast states were analyzed to identify occupational HRI numbers and rates, demographic characteristics, and co-morbid conditions.
RESULTS: There were 8,315 occupational HRI ED visits (6.5/100,000 workers) and 1,051 IHs (0.61/100,000) in the southeast over the study period. Out-of-state residents comprised 8% of ED visits and 12% of IHs. Rates for both, ED visits and IHs were significantly elevated in males and blacks. Younger workers had elevated rates for ED visits, while older workers had higher IH rates.
CONCLUSIONS: This is the first study to evaluate occupational HRI ED visits and IHs in the southeast region and indicates the need for enhanced heat stress prevention policies in the southeast. Findings from this study can be used to direct state health department tracking and evaluation of occupational HRI. Am.
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