



SAFETY AND HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

. . . Cases of Occupational Diseases (Last of a 4-Part Series)

The 2015/2016 Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment (ISLE) is one of the regular establishment-based surveys of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) which is conducted every two (2) years. The survey covered a total of 12,926 agricultural and non-agricultural establishments employing 20 or more workers nationwide.

This series of LABSTAT Updates highlights the results of the 2015/2016 Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment (ISLE). In particular, this last issue focuses on the results of the module on "Occupational Injuries and Diseases". Presented in this issue are statistics on the number of cases of occupational diseases by major industry group and occupational diseases by type of disease for the period 2015 as compared with 2013. Also included are common occupational diseases on the sub-sectors on (1) call center activities and; (2) rental and leasing activities; security and investigation activities; services to buildings and landscape activities.

An occupational disease is defined as an abnormal condition or disorder other than one resulting from an occupational injury caused by exposure over a period of time to risk factors associated with work activity such as contact with certain chemicals, inhaling coal dust, carrying out repetitive movements, etc.

The metadata and the statistical tables on the survey results of the 2015/2016 ISLE are posted at the PSA website at www.psa.gov.ph.

Majority of cases of occupational diseases declined in 2015

- The total cases of occupational diseases in establishments reached 125,973 in 2015. This is comparatively lower by 26.7 percent than the reported cases in 2013 (171,787). (Table 3)
- Among industries, 13 out of the 18 major industries nationwide reported varying levels of declines in the number of cases of occupational diseases in 2015. The biggest decrease (81.3%) was recorded in mining and quarrying from 9,255 in 2013 down to 1,735 in 2015.
- On the other hand, the number of occupational diseases grew the most in real estate activities which increased by 189.6 percent from 240 cases in 2013 to 695 in 2013.
- The distribution of occupational diseases across industries in 2015 showed that administrative and support service activities (34.3% or 43,183) and manufacturing industry (31.1% or 39,143) jointly comprised almost two-thirds (65.4%) of the total cases of occupational diseases during the year.
- Meanwhile, industries which posted least shares of occupational diseases include: (1) water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (0.4%); (2) arts, entertainment and recreation (0.3%); and (3) repair of computers and personal and household goods, and other personal service activities (0.3%).



Call center activities posted the highest share of occupational diseases under administrative and support services industry

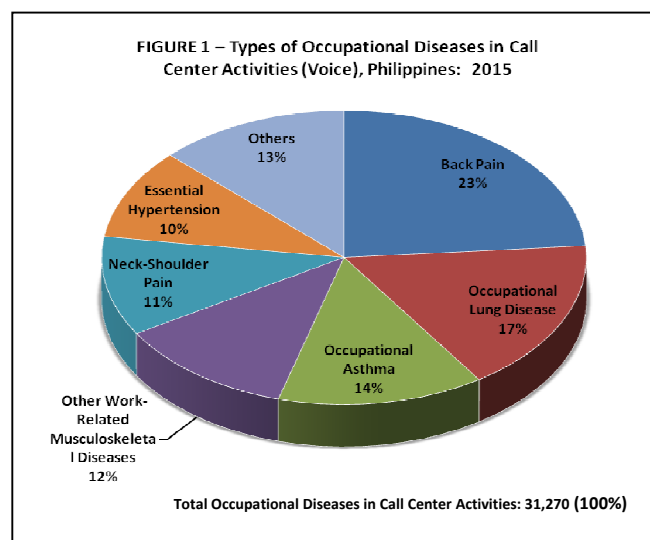
- Noteworthy, call center activities (voice) exceeded all other sub-sectors in the administrative and support services industry on the number of cases of occupational diseases in 2015 at 31,270. This is equivalent to almost one-fourth (24.8 percent) of the total cases which means that 1 out of every 4 cases of total occupational diseases in the industry originated from this sub-sector. (Table 1)

TABLE 1 – Cases of Occupational Diseases by Type in Call Center Activities (Voice), Philippines: 2015

Cases of Occupational Diseases	Number	Percent Share
Call Center Activities (Voice)	31,270	100.0
<i>Back Pain</i>	<i>7,428</i>	<i>23.8</i>
<i>Occupational Lung Disease</i>	<i>5,266</i>	<i>16.8</i>
<i>Occupational Asthma</i>	<i>4,305</i>	<i>13.8</i>
<i>Other Work-Related Musculoskeletal Diseases</i>	<i>3,745</i>	<i>12.0</i>
<i>Neck-Shoulder Pain</i>	<i>3,410</i>	<i>10.9</i>
<i>Essential Hypertension</i>	<i>3,124</i>	<i>10.0</i>
<i>Other occupational diseases</i>	<i>3,992</i>	<i>12.8</i>

Source of data: Philippine Statistics Authority, Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment.

- Specifically, the six (6) occupational diseases with the highest incidences in the call center activities (voice) sub-sector were as follows: (1) back pain (23.8% or 7,428); (2) occupational lung disease (16.8% or 5,266); (3) occupational asthma (13.8% or 4,305); (4) other work-related musculoskeletal diseases (12.0% or 3,745); (5) neck-shoulder pain (10.9% or 3,410); and (6) essential hypertension. (Figure 1)
- This may be attributed on the nature of work in the sector mostly characterized by mental and emotional stress brought about by frequent repetitive tasks coupled with prolonged sitting and lengthy verbal communication with clients.



Source of data: Philippine Statistics Authority, Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment.

Back pain, still the most common type of occupational disease among workers in 2015, 2013 and 2011

- Although cases of back pains among workers in establishments declined by 23.8 percent from 54,244 in 2013 to 41,335 in 2015, this disease still remained to be the most common type of occupational disease since 2011. (Table 4)
- 1 out of every 3 (32.8%) occupational diseases reported in 2015 were back

pains. Back pain is highest in industries involving manual labor such as in manufacturing (34.3% or 14,185 cases) and those that require sitting for long periods of time like that in administrative and support service activities (25.6% or 10,581 cases) majority of which involve call center activities. (Table 2)

- Aside from back pains, also included in the top five occupational diseases in 2015 were essential hypertension (11.5% or 14,539); neck and shoulder pain (11.4% or 14,392); other work-related musculoskeletal diseases (7.7% or 9,664); and occupational asthma (6.6% or 8,363).
- Meanwhile, lesser cases of occupational diseases involved deafness; cataract; occupational kidney disease; and other diseases all at 0.2 percent.

TABLE 2 – Cases of Back Pain by Major Industry, Philippines: 2015

Industry	Number	Percent Share
Back Pain	41,335	100.0
Manufacturing	14,185	34.3
Administrative and Support Service Activities	10,581	25.6
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	4,668	11.3
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2,440	5.9
Education except Public Education	2,076	5.0
Other Industries	7,385	17.9

Source of data: Philippine Statistics Authority, Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment.

10 out of the 16 occupational diseases declined in 2015

- Cases of occupational diseases in 2015 decreased in 10 out of 16 various types of diseases compared to 2013. (Table 4). The decline ranged from 6.2 percent (occupational asthma) to 97.8 percent (other diseases). On the other hand, growth was observed in other types of diseases ranging from 4.4 percent (deafness) to 58.5 percent (other work-related musculoskeletal disease)
- Specifically, other occupational diseases aside from occupational asthma that dropped during the period include: other cases of infections (44.3%); heat, stroke, cramp and exhaustion (39.8%); occupational dermatitis (34.0%); and essential hypertension (25.0%).
- On the other hand, the following occupational diseases escalated during the period: work-related musculoskeletal diseases (58.5%); cataract (41.7%); and shoulder tendinitis (32.5%).

Definition of Terms:

Back pain - affecting the bones, joints, connective tissues, muscles and nerves at the lumbar or sacral regions but not due to trauma.

Essential hypertension - primary hypertension that causes impairment of function of kidneys, ears, eyes and brain resulting in permanent disability.

Neck-shoulder pain - affecting the bones, joints, connective tissue, muscles and nerves of the cervical area.

Other Work-related musculoskeletal disorders - caused or made worst by work such as exposure to forceful exertions, highly repetitive motions, awkward body postures, vibrations, etc.

Occupational dermatitis - includes skin conditions due to chemical agents which are skin irritants and sensitizer.

Occupational asthma - due to exposure to allergenic particles in the working environment.

Carpal tunnel syndrome - tingling, numbness or pain in wrist and hand from compression of the median nerve at the wrist area due to repetitive or forceful hand movement.

Occupational lung diseases - pneumoconiosis.

Shoulder tendinitis - inflammation of the tendon affecting the shoulder joint due to use, overuse and pressure.

Other Infections - due to exposure to biologic hazards/agents, e.g., anthrax, brucellosis, leptospirosis, tetanus, ornithosis, rabies, viral encephalitis, viral hemorrhagic fevers, hepatitis A, B, C, D, HIV, mycoses, protozoal and parasitic diseases.

Tuberculosis - infections due to mycobacterium tuberculosis.

Cardio-vascular diseases - cardiac injury or acute attack precipitated by unusual strains of work.

Heat stroke, cramp, exhaustion - due to exposure to excessive heat.

Other diseases caused by chemicals

Chilblain, frostbite, freezing - due to exposure to excessive cold.

Deafness - loss of or decreased hearing due to excessive exposure to noise.

Cataract - due to exposure to glare of or rays from molten glass or red hot metal.

Occupational kidney disease - caused by heavy metals or organic solvents.

Acute poisoning - due to exposure to toxic chemical substances.

Peptic Ulcer - due to prolonged emotional or physical stress at work.

FOR INQUIRIES

Regarding this report, contact **LABOR STANDARDS AND RELATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION** at 376-1921

Regarding other statistics, contact **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION** at 462-6600 local 834

Or visit our website at <https://www.psa.gov.ph/labstat-updates>

TABLE 3 - Cases of Occupational Diseases in Establishments Employing 20 or More Workers by Major Industry Group, Philippines: 2013 and 2015

MAJOR INDUSTRY GROUP	2013	2015	Percent Change	Percent Share (2015)
ALL INDUSTRIES	171,787	125,973	(26.7)	100.0
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	4,803	5,145	7.1	4.1
Mining and Quarrying	9,255	1,735	(81.3)	1.4
Manufacturing	51,110	39,143	(23.4)	31.1
Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	4,108	1,086	(73.6)	0.9
Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities	266	451	69.5	0.4
Construction	4,175	2,468	(40.9)	2.0
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	10,816	9,392	(13.2)	7.5
Transportation and Storage	3,429	4,011	17.0	3.2
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	3,712	3,519	(5.2)	2.8
Information and Communications	6,258	2,267	(63.8)	1.8
Financial and Insurance Activities	5,504	2,777	(49.5)	2.2
Real Estate Activities	240	695	189.6	0.6
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	1,517	1,016	(33.0)	0.8
Administrative and Support Service Activities	56,115	43,183	(23.0)	34.3
Education Except Public Education	5,746	5,705	(0.7)	4.5
Human Health and Social Work Activities Except Public Health Activities	2,986	2,537	(15.0)	2.0
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1,464	411	(71.9)	0.3
Repair of Computers and Personal and Household Goods; Other Personal Service Activities	286	432	51.0	0.3

Note: Details may not add up to totals due to rounding.

Source of data: Philippine Statistics Authority, Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment.

TABLE 4 – Cases of Occupational Diseases in Establishments Employing 20 or More Workers by Type of Disease, Philippines: 2013 and 2015

TYPE OF DISEASE	2013	2015	Percent Change	Percent Share (2015)
TOTAL	171,787	125,974	(26.7)	100.0
Back Pain	54,244	41,335	(23.8)	32.8
Essential Hypertension	19,382	14,539	(25.0)	11.5
Neck-Shoulder Pain	18,255	14,392	(21.2)	11.4
Other Work-Related Musculoskeletal Diseases	6,099	9,664	58.5	7.7
Occupational Asthma	8,914	8,363	(6.2)	6.6
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	6,098	7,020	15.1	5.6
Occupational Lung Disease	*	6,602		5.2
Shoulder Tendinitis	4,758	6,305	32.5	5.0
Occupational Dermatitis	9,381	6,196	(34.0)	4.9
Other Infections	6,395	3,559	(44.3)	2.8
Tuberculosis	3,670	3,320	(9.5)	2.6
Cardio-Vascular Disease	1,679	1,567	(6.7)	1.2
Heat, Stroke, Cramp, Exhaustion	1,792	1,078	(39.8)	0.9
Other Diseases Caused by Chemicals	*	666		0.5
Chilblain, Frostbite, Freezing	268	321	19.8	0.3
Deafness	296	309	4.4	0.2
Cataract	218	309	41.7	0.2
Occupational Kidney Disease	*	190		0.2
Other Diseases	10,779	239	(97.8)	0.2
Acute Poisoning	125	*		
Peptic Ulcer	19,434	*		

Note: Details may not add up to totals due to rounding.

* Not included.

Source of data: Philippine Statistics Authority, Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment.