

TITLE: Workplace violence in food services: Workers' compensation and lived experience

ABSTRACT:

Workplace violence poses an urgent public health threat within the service sector. With the rise of COVID-19 and related prevention policies, businesses and workers enforcing such mandates are subject to more workplace violence and harassment than ever. To better understand and raise awareness about violence in the service sector, I will conduct a study on workplace violence in the food service industry. I will begin the study by analyzing statewide data on workers' compensation claims submitted by food service industry workers between 2018 and 2022. I will compare these claims with those submitted by retail industry workers during the same years. Bivariate analyses will cover the distribution of claims by age, gender, specific NAICS code, job type, full- or part-time status, and other relevant variables. Multivariate analyses will serve to compare food services and drinking places with general merchandise retailers, as well as to compare cases before the March 2020 COVID-19 pandemic declaration with cases after this declaration. I will use these findings to facilitate qualitative research — namely, focus groups with restaurant workers in LA County — and “ground-truthing” of the quantitative data set. Finally, I will present the results of both quantitative and qualitative data collection to relevant stakeholders. Based on feedback from community members and occupational health experts, I will produce a report and academic journal article to disseminate the study findings and bolster policy recommendations.