

Work-Related Injuries and Diseases among Filipino Seafarers: a Review of Employees' Compensation Claims from the Social Security System, 2010-2014

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Abstract

The Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC) has carried out studies on the safety and health conditions of workers not only from the private sector but from government sector as well. While previous studies on workers' compensation included review of data from both the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the Social Security System (SSS), more detailed information is needed to provide a better profile on occupational or work-related illnesses and injuries of seafarers which this paper will determine.

The 2016-2018 study will profile the claims of work-related injuries and illnesses approved by the SSS for seafarers both working locally and abroad in 2010 until 2012. More specifically, the study aims to determine the number of claims filed by industry; determine the number of claims approved and denied filed by seafarers; determine the socio-demographic profile of seafarer claimants; and identify the most common diseases / injuries approved for compensation;

The records were taken from the compensated claims under the Employees' Compensation Program of the Social Security System covering the period 2010-2014. There were a total of 142,197 records filed for compensation in the covered period. For 2010 there 30,394 records, 2011 = 30892, 2012 = 28,008, 2013 = 26,850, and 2014=26,053. Statistical analysis was conducted

using SPSS PASW version 18 and Microsoft Office Excel 2007. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions were used to analyze the data.

For 2016, 30,394 records covering 2010 only were analyzed due to the big number of records turned over. It gave us a perspective of cases claimed for compensation. The age range of the claimants was 19-64.

Seafarers belong to several industries, namely: Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Industry, Transportation and Storage, and Administrative and Support Service Activities. They comprise 2.22% (N=671) of the total claims filed for compensation in 2010. Of the claims filed by seafarers, 91.51% (N=614) were approved for compensation. Most (N=537) of the approved cases were due to injuries brought about by injuries of the wrist and hands (N=154). Of the 53 diseases compensated, the most common was diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue (N=17) mostly those in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Industry.

The lower age range is not in agreement of the principle of development of occupational diseases which is mostly due to chronic exposure. This finding may also indicate that occupational safety and health (OSH) programs should also give attention on the young workers for the prevention of work-related injuries and diseases. The Fishing Industry had the most number of diseases and injuries compensated. The most common disease compensated was that of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissues while that for injury was that of the wrist and hand. These may be attributable to the job demand of

fishermen. A better understanding of the fishing methods or practices in the industry would better identify preventive measures for diseases and injuries.