



Background

Immigrant workers, particularly recent immigrants who may have lower English proficiency and a lack of familiarity with Canadian social programs, face particular challenges after a work injury. They may not know their employment rights and may have trouble accessing, understanding, and navigating the compensation system. Although work disability can have negative impacts on the physical and mental health of immigrants and their families, no Canadian research has examined immigrant workers' experiences after a work injury. The purpose of this study was to investigate differences in disability duration by immigration status for injured workers with a workers' compensation claim compared to Canadian-born injured workers.

Methods

Workers in British Columbia with an accepted workers' compensation claim between 1995 and 2012 were linked to Citizenship and Immigration Canada Permanent Residents data. Injured workers were identified as recent immigrants (less than 10 years in Canada), established immigrants (10 years or more in Canada), and Canadian-born workers, at the time of their injury. Disability duration was defined as the number of disability days paid in the first year after injury. Differences in disability duration by immigration status were examined at the 25th, 50th and 75th percentiles of the distribution using quantile regression. Models were adjusted for age, gender, occupation, injury year, injury type, and previous claims and were stratified by age and sex to investigate interaction effects.

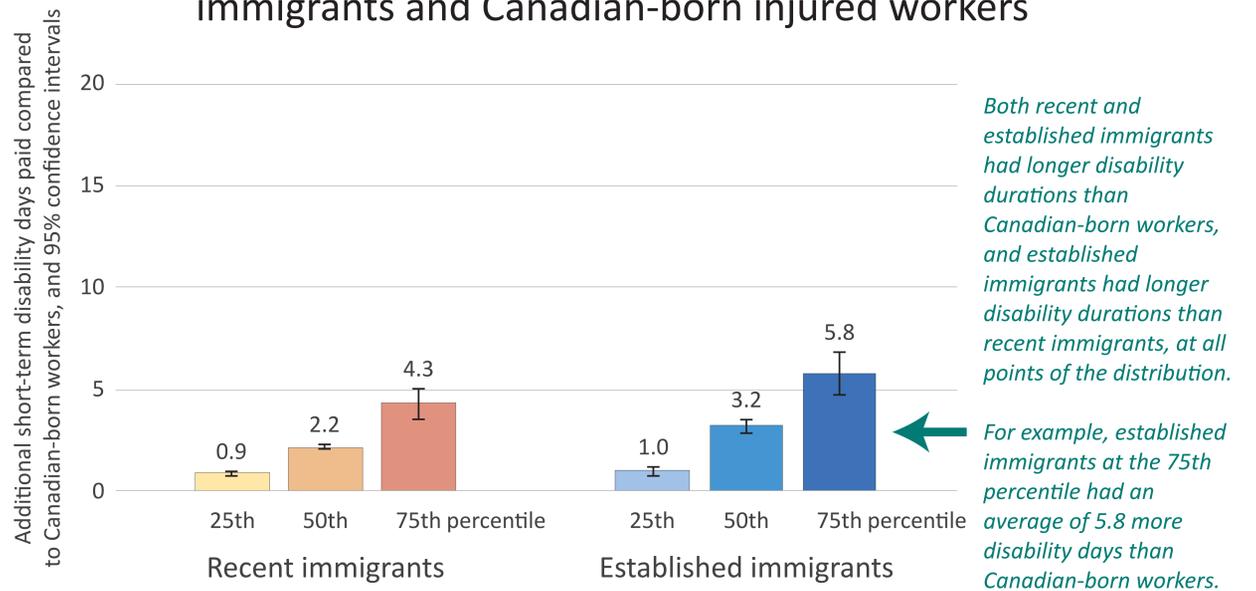
Results

Both recent and established immigrants had longer work disability durations than Canadian-born workers, at all points of the distribution, and after adjusting for demographic and occupation characteristics. The relationship between immigration status and disability duration was greater for younger immigrant workers than for older immigrant workers and for immigrant men than for immigrant women.

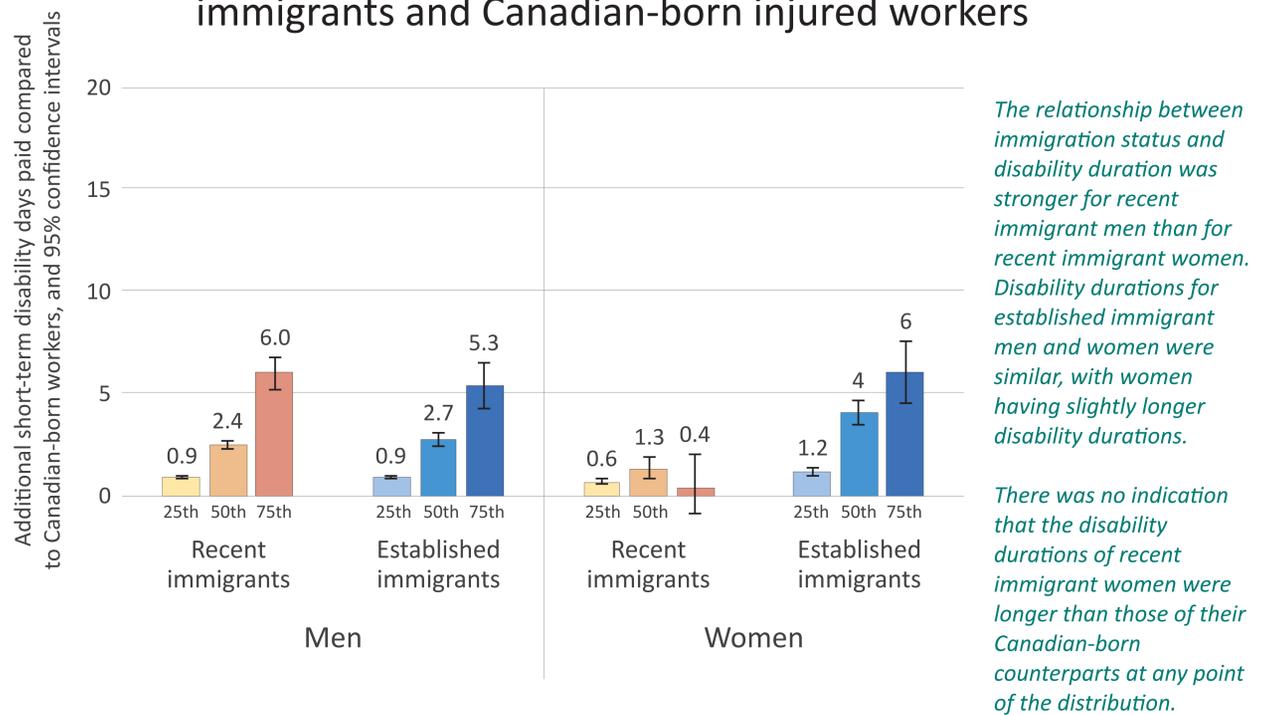
Conclusions

Immigrants had longer disability durations than Canadian-born workers, at all points of the distribution. Possible explanations for immigrants' longer disability durations include their lower English proficiency, shorter job tenure, and higher rates of serious injuries. Established immigrants had longer disability durations than recent immigrants, at all points of the distribution. Possible explanations for recent immigrants' shorter disability duration include their higher levels of job insecurity and financial problems, which could motivate them to return to work faster. Overall, results indicate that immigrants may face barriers to returning to work following a work-related injury and that these barriers persist over time and are greatest for younger immigrant workers and recent immigrant men. Future research may need to focus on interventions to reduce these inequalities.

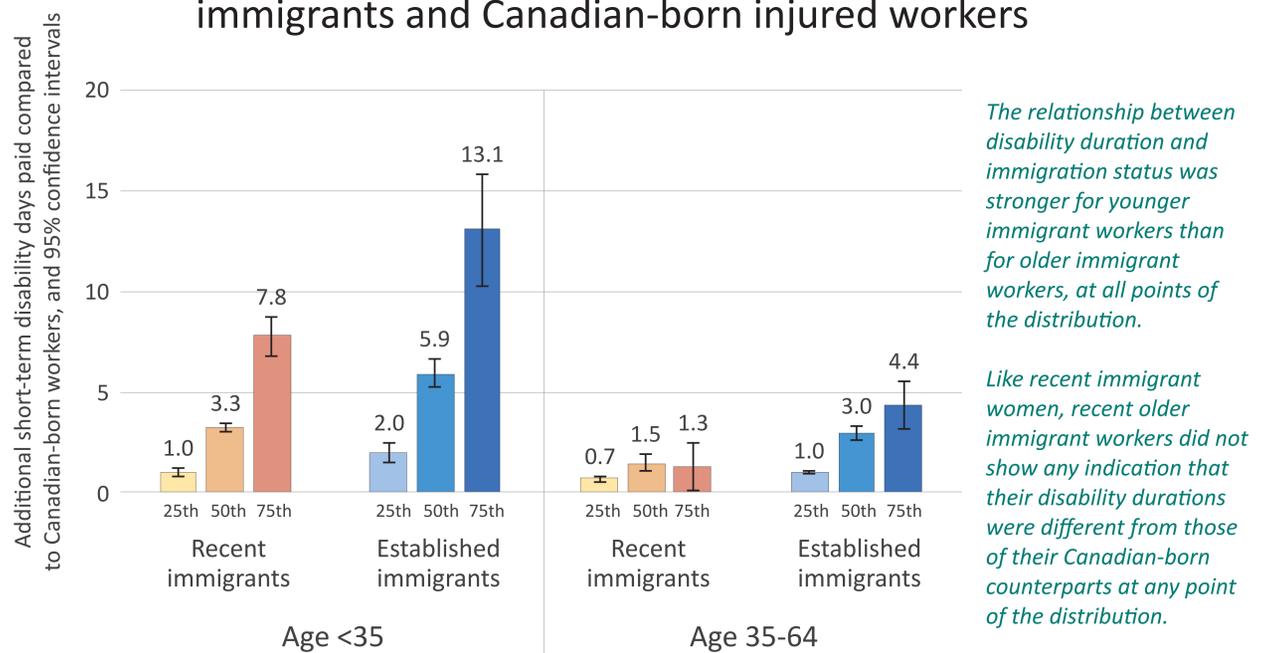
Differences in disability durations between immigrants and Canadian-born injured workers



Gender differences in disability durations between immigrants and Canadian-born injured workers



Age differences in disability durations between immigrants and Canadian-born injured workers



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