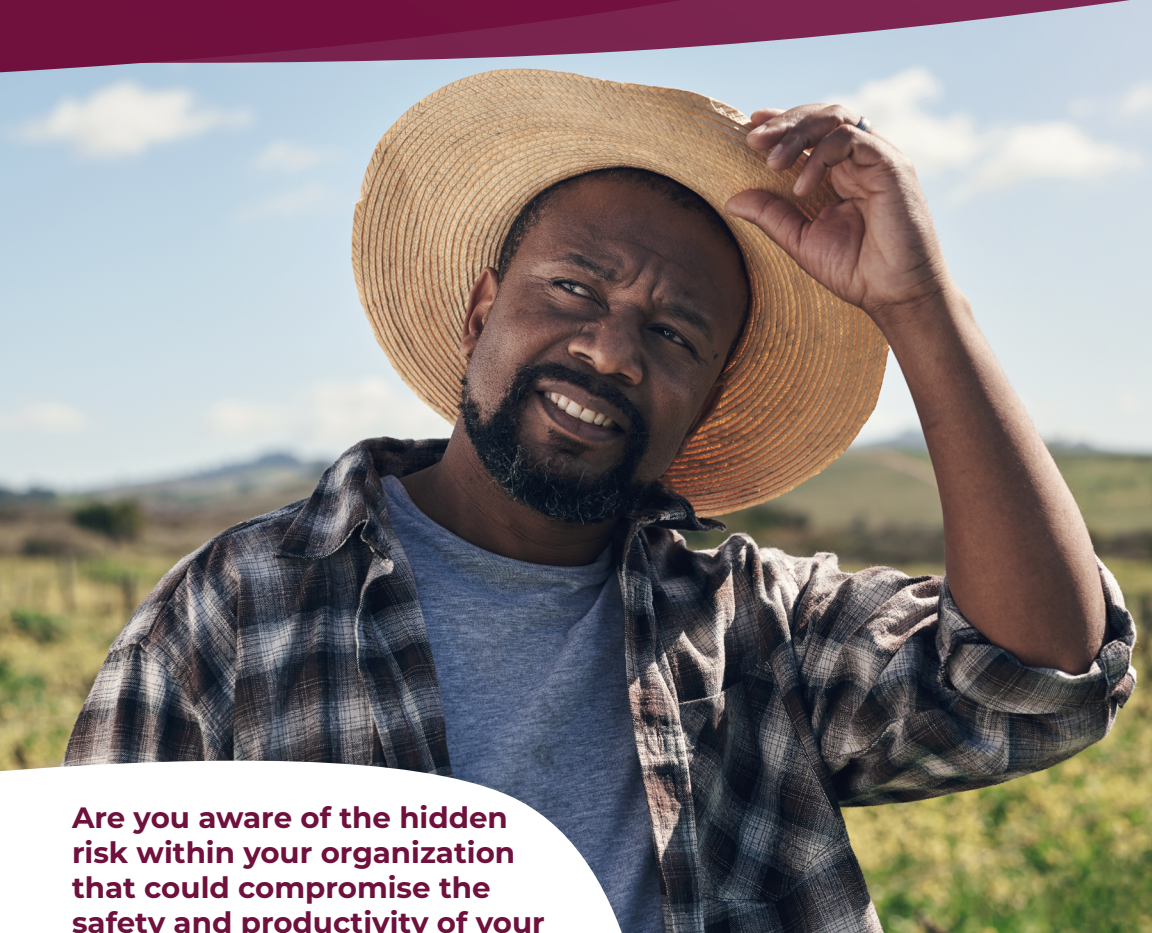


The Unseen Connection: Mental Health and Heat-Related Illnesses



Are you aware of the hidden risk within your organization that could compromise the safety and productivity of your workforce?

As a safety, human resources, or risk manager in hands-on service industries -- spanning oil & gas, healthcare, construction to retail -- it is crucial to understand the often-overlooked connection between mental health and heat-related illnesses. This guide will provide you with essential insights into this relationship and practical strategies to safeguard your workforce.

The Issue at Hand

Extreme heat, a common environmental hazard in many service industries, has been linked with significant mental health effects. According to the American Psychiatric Association, exposure to elevated temperatures can lead to increased irritability, depressive symptoms, and even a heightened risk of suicide [1].

Studies have shown that individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions are among those at the highest risk for heat-related illnesses or even death [4]. Furthermore, certain psychiatric medications and substances such as alcohol, common in almost 50% of heat-related hospitalizations among workers, can exacerbate this risk [2] [7].

Understanding the Problem

Depression, experienced by about 21 million Americans, often involves difficulty regulating body temperature, thereby increasing susceptibility to heat-related illnesses [3]. Simultaneously, hot temperatures have been associated with increased emergency room visits due to mental health concerns [5].

This intricate relationship is further evidenced in several industries. For instance, a study in the construction industry showed excessive heat contributed to symptoms like difficulty concentrating, irritability, and frequent mood swings [9]. In another report, half of those who died from heat-related illness during a heat wave also had a mental illness [10].





Practical Steps for Managers

Given this alarming data, taking proactive steps to protect your workforce is vital. Here are some strategies to consider:

1. Risk Assessment

Identify workers with pre-existing mental conditions or who are on psychiatric medications, as they may be more susceptible to heat stress. Key tip: Enlist the support of licensed medical health professionals to assist with medication reviews or discussion of personal health history.

2. Education & Training

Conduct regular training sessions to educate employees about the risks of heat exposure, the connection with mental health, and the importance of staying hydrated and taking regular breaks.

3. Workplace Modification

Provide cooled rest areas, schedule strenuous tasks for cooler times, and implement rotation systems to reduce heat exposure.

4. Support Mechanisms

Encourage open communication about mental health, provide access to counseling services, and establish a supportive work environment.

5. Emergency Response Plan

Ensure you have a robust plan in place for responding to heat-related emergencies, including first aid training and resources.

Take the Next Step with



In conclusion, understanding and acknowledging the interaction between mental health and heat-related illnesses can significantly **improve employee well-being** and **productivity**. But we understand that taking on this responsibility can be a daunting task.

This is where Axiom Medical comes in. As the only occupational health provider offering comprehensive **physical + mental health assessments**, we bring a unique approach to maintaining your workplace's safety and the health of your workers.

Our services are tailored to your specific needs, offering a full support system to manage both the seen and unseen risks, like heat-related illnesses and mental health challenges.

Partner with us today. Together, we can create a safer, healthier workplace environment.



**Injury Case
Management**



**Axiom Medical
App**



**Physical + Mental
Health Assessments**



**Tailored to Your
Specific Needs**



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