Introduction

Some injury and diseases, both work and non work-related, end in permanent disabilities for workers, who have been affiliated with the social security regimen for at least five years. A permanent disability means that a worker has received a medical treatment, presents functional and/or anatomical limitations which can be assessed objectively, and these limitations reduce his/her work capacity permanently.

Objective

To describe the incidence of permanent disability, work-related and non work-related, according to several socio-economic and geographical variables.

Subjects and methods

The study design was a retrospective cohort of 768,454 workers covered by the Social Security General Schedule (CEMSA cohort), selected in 2004 and tracked until 2007, and based on the Continuous Working Life Survey. During this period, 7,749 cases of permanent disability (7,032; 2004 and tracked until 2007, and based on the Continuous Working Life Survey. During this period, 7,749 cases of permanent disability (7,032; 2,5) y RR=3,2; CI95%= (2,1; 4,9), for work-related and non work-related (7.8 versus 1.9). This differential was maintained (RR= 2,2; CI95%=(1,9; 2,5) y RR=3,2; CI95%=(2,1; 4,9), for work-related and non work-related respectively, after adjusting by age, sex, educational level, company size and economic activity.

Results

Non work-related permanent disability incidence was 10 times greater than work-related (38.3 versus 3.7 per 10,000 worker-years). Incidences were highest for men, and increasing with age and lesser education level. Asturias was the region with the highest incidence compared to Madrid, for non work-related (56.7 versus 23.3) as well as work-related (7.8 versus 1.9). This differential was maintained (RR= 2.2; CI95%=(1.9; 2.5) y RR=3.2; CI95%= (2.1; 4.9), for work-related and non work-related respectively, after adjusting by age, sex, educational level, company size and economic activity.

Conclusions

In this first cohort study of permanent disability, we observed great differences in incidences by demographics, social and geographical characteristics which have to be analyzed in depth, especially those differences by region.