



## **NEW STUDY: Latina Housekeepers Face “Alarming” Injury Rate . . . Almost Twice the Risk of White Housekeepers Doing the Same Job**

American Journal of Industrial Medicine recently published a groundbreaking, peer-reviewed study authored by a team of researchers from four universities and UNITE HERE, which studied the difference in hotel workers’ injury rates by sex, race/ethnicity, job title and hotel employer. Authors studied injury records from 2003-2005 at 50 union hotels operated by the top five hotel companies.

*American Journal of Industrial Medicine*

*“Our results show an **alarming injury rate among housekeepers in general and Hispanic housekeepers in particular.**” p. 5*

### **1. Latina Housekeepers Had Highest Injury Rate in the Study.**

- ➔ With an injury rate of 10.6, Hispanic housekeepers had the highest injury rate of all housekeepers studied.
- ➔ Hispanic housekeepers face a risk of injury almost twice that of white housekeepers.

### **2. Hotel housekeeping is a surprisingly dangerous and painful job.**

Behind the luxury and comfort that housekeepers provide for hotel guests is a pattern of persistent pain and injury. Luxury beds with heavier mattresses and linens, triple-sheeting, duvets, and extra pillows are standard in full service hotels, along with coffee pots and large hard-to-clean mirrors, making room cleaning difficult and fast-paced. Housekeepers are usually required to clean 15 or more rooms a day under intense time pressure created by a quota system – the hotel industry’s version of a “speed-up”.

A survey of more than 600 housekeepers conducted in 2005 by UNITE HERE revealed the level of pain carried by housekeepers: **91% of housekeepers surveyed said that they have suffered work-related pain, and of those, 66% took pain medication just to get through their daily quota.**

### **3. Hyatt Housekeepers Had Highest Risk of Injury By Company in the Study.**

- ➔ Housekeepers working at Hyatt hotels in the AJIM published study had the highest injury rate at 10.4 with a risk of injury twice that of the company with the lowest rates.
- ➔ “Large differences of injury rates between employers indicate a substantial potential for injury prevention in the hotel sector.” [Buchanan study, AJIM]

*“Cleaning between 25 and 30 rooms a day demands working fast and this is how I hurt my body. I am permanently injured in my lower back and shoulder and I can no longer work as a housekeeper. I have pain every day.”*

**Study Overview** Jobs studied include housekeepers, dishwashers, kitchen workers and banquet servers, representing 46% of the study population. Over 55,000 worker-years of observation and 2,865 injuries were included. Some workers had up to three injuries during the study period and many were employed for multiple years. **For more information: UNITE HERE Health & Safety, Pamela Vossen, [pvossenas@unitehere.org](mailto:pvossenas@unitehere.org) or (212) 332-9318.**

*Celia Alvarez, a Housekeeper who worked at the non-union Hyatt Regency in Long Beach for 19 years before becoming permanently injured*