

Prevalence and Associated Factors of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders among The Health-Supportive Staff of a Tertiary Care Hospital in Kandy, Sri Lanka

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Introduction: In hospital settings, Attendants and Health Care Assistants, who are commonly referred as Health Supportive Workers (HSWs), are responsible for handling patients and other medical equipment manually, which can lead to Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WRMSDs). Therefore, this study was focused on determining the prevalence and identifying associated factors of WRMSDs among the health-supportive staff of National Hospital Kandy, Sri Lanka. **Methodology:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at National Hospital Kandy, Sri Lanka from November to December 2023. The required sample size was 403 HSWs, who were selected from each ward set-up using a random sampling method. The standard Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire was used to assess WRMSDs. The chi-square test was used to describe associations between variables. **Results:** Out of the total sample, 88.6% (n=357) of HSWs were suffering from WRMSDs. The most affected areas of the body were the lower limb (n=283,70.2%), lower back (n=182,45.2%), and neck (n=179,44.4%). The majority of workers (n=171, 42.4%) had been suffering from WRMSDs for more than one year. Forceful exertion (n=259, 64.3%), lifting weights (n=193, 47.9%), and awkward postures (n=190, 47.1%) were identified as the most prevalent risk factors for WRMSDs. A statistically significant association between gender and WRMSDs was found ($p=0.009$), however, age ($p=0.101$), years of experience ($p=0.949$), and educational level ($p=0.241$) did not show any statistically significant association with WRMSDs. **Conclusion:** The majority of HSWs suffer from WRMSDs as a result of risk factors like forceful exertions, lifting weights, awkward postures, gender, etc. Lifting weights with awkward postures exert an effect on the lower limb and lower back. Therefore, it is recommended to organize ergonomics training programs, introduce a self-evaluation checklist, introduce an ergonomic-friendly work environment and instruments to prevent WRMSDs among HSWs.

Keywords: Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders, Risk Factors, Prevalence, Health Supportive Staff.