

Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders Among Physiotherapists: A literature Review

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Abstract

Background: Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WRMSD) may occur as a result of repeated exposure to loads or to repeated movements over time. Physiotherapy treatments are characterized by repeated physical exertion and the use of manual treatments to achieve treatment goals. These characteristics are risk factors for WRMSD, physical fatigue and burnout that may in turn potentially lead to decreased quality of care. WRMSD may also have a negative impact on the caregivers' ability to work and maintain a healthy lifestyle, leading also to career path changes. The aim of this article is to review the prevalence of WRMSD among physiotherapists, to examine its risk factors, and to offer recommendations for prevention.

Methods: This literature review is based on cross-sectional studies and literature reviews, found in the search engines: PubMed, Google Scholar, Pedro, and Summon. The following keywords were used: "Work-related disorders", "occupational health", "work-related musculoskeletal disorder", "risk factors", "prevalence", and "prevention"

Results: There is a varying prevalence of WRMSD between studies. Anthropometric data and various clinical specialties have been found to be associated with musculoskeletal symptoms. The individual's work technique, which might include lifting or moving a patient, working in a poor posture, working while bending or twisting the spine, are some of the risk factors reported and reviewed. In the quest for prevention, strategies such as the use of equipment and assistive devices for transferring patients are suggested.

Conclusions: This review shows a high rate of WRMSD among physiotherapist. Anthropometric measures, field of specialization, and seniority in the profession, correlated with the risk of injury. Prevention strategies can be classified into improved personal ergonomics and organizational changes at the institutional level. There is a need for further research to develop additional prevention strategies to minimize this phenomenon.

Keywords: Work-related disorders, Occupational health, Work-related musculoskeletal disorder, Risk factors, Prevalence, Prevention