

Musculoskeletal Symptoms among Physiotherapists in India

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INTRODUCTION

- Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSD) are common in physiotherapists and are continually growing.
- Previous authors have estimated that over 60% of physiotherapists experience work-related pain and discomfort throughout the world.
- Numerous studies have indicated that the WRMSD prevalence is higher (approximately 80%) in physiotherapists below the age of 35 and they typically develop symptoms in the first five years of their occupation.
- Cromie et al found that even though 91% of physiotherapists in their study were affected by WRMSD at some time in their career and 88% have a history of recurring WRMSD, only 7.1% claimed for workers compensation.
- The high prevalence of WRMSD in physiotherapists has forced many to reconsider their career and leave their current job in many countries.
- The prevalence and risk factors for WRMSD has not been studied in Indian Physiotherapists.
- This study was conducted to estimate the prevalence and risk factors of WRMSD in Indian Physiotherapists.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design & Sample: 100 Physiotherapist participated in this study by random selection. The Physiotherapists were contacted through email and telephone initially. Then the objective of the study was explained to all the Physiotherapist and signed informed consent were obtained from all of them.

Recruitment Strategy:

Inclusion Criteria:

Minimum one year of work experience
Working as a full time physiotherapists
Not involved in any other occupation (full time or part time)

Exclusion criteria:

Any other systemic health problems
Suffering from any other musculoskeletal disorders

The study was duly approved by the Institutional Review Board.

Variables Studied and tool used:

Prevalence of Musculoskeletal Pain: Using Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire

Work style Risk Factors: Using Short form of Work style Questionnaire

RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic Data of the Subjects

Participants	N=100
Age (years)	26.77 (± 3.11)
Height (cm)	164.10 (± 9.22)
Weight (Kg)	63.93 (± 12.64)
BMI (Kg/m ²)	23.64 (± 3.78)
Experience (Years)	3.40 (± 2.93)
Working Hours Per day	9.22 (± 1.23)

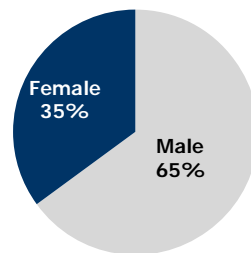
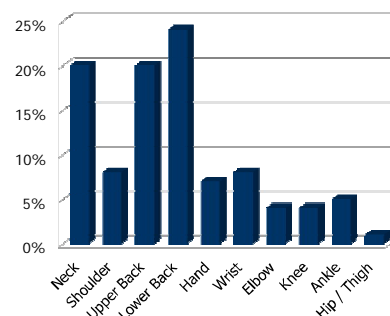


Figure 1. Distribution of Gender

- 48% of participants were of the age group 25-30 years.
- 80% of the participants were within 5 years of starting their Physiotherapy careers.
- 50% of the participants were overweight (BMI > 25).
- 92% of participants worked for more than 9 hours every day.
- 80% of participants had Orthopaedics as their area of specialisation.



Result of Work style Questionnaire

- Analysis of short form of workstyle questionnaire revealed that 72.72% of the subjects had an adverse workstyle (total score ≥ 28).
- 87% of the Physiotherapists revealed that they worked through pain.
- There was a significant positive correlation between adverse workstyle score and pain experienced by the participant, physical risk factors and pain, awkward posture for longer period and low back pain, working prolonged periods in squatting / kneeling and knee pain, lifting and carrying patients for prolonged periods and low back pain, regularly applying force with hands for treatment and hand pain, and bending and twisting upper body repeatedly and upper back pain.

DISCUSSION

More research and studies are needed to clearly understand the causes and prevention of WRMSD in physiotherapists. Eliminating all the risk factors associated with the development of WRMSD in physiotherapist may not be possible due to the nature of the job, but based on the number of prevention techniques being suggested, it is possible to reduce the risk factors leading to WRMSD. Several studies have identified risk factors and prevention strategies, however further investigation regarding the efficiency of these strategies is warranted.

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