

[IMAGE]

When Pain Strikes at the Workplace

Complaints of musculoskeletal pain (especially low back pain) account for more than 300 million physician visits annually in the U.S. alone, despite advances in research, treatment and rehabilitation. More than 50% of women experience at least one episode of low back pain (LBP) by age 18; 50% of men experience the same by age 20.

In a study designed to investigate potential workplace factors contributing to musculoskeletal pain, 6,626 men completed a questionnaire and physical and psychological examinations at age 18 (1979-1980). In 1999, 6,266 of the original subjects were located and completed a follow-up questionnaire. Both the baseline and follow-up questionnaires focused on back and neck pain and exposure to physical load in the work environment; the follow-up questionnaire also contained a self-administered test of physical function.

A significantly higher risk of frequent back, neck and/or shoulder problems was noted at follow-up in men who performed heavy work or who described a "great effect of back pain on everyday activities" at baseline. Specifically, early back pain causing work absence, reduced activity, and heavy workload corresponded with higher risk for future back pain.

What can you do to combat musculoskeletal pain? For tips on prevention and management of this all-too-common condition, schedule an appointment with your doctor of chiropractic! For more information on back pain, visit <http://www.chiroweb.com/find/tellmeabout/backpain.html>.

Reference:

Hellsing A-L, Bryngelsson I-L. Predictors of musculoskeletal pain in men. A twenty-year follow-up from examination at enlistment. *Spine* 2000; Vol. 25, No. 23, pp3080-86.

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