

[IMAGE]

Which Activities Cause Your Kids Pain?

Have your kids ever complained to you about persistent neck or shoulder pain? More than one in 10 adolescent boys, and one in five girls, suffer from long-term neck and shoulder symptoms; some data suggests that these problems may appear in more than half of adolescents. The repetitive movements involved with playing musical instruments, working, and participating in sports have been considered possible causes of these conditions.

On three occasions, each spaced six months apart, researchers collected data from approximately 500 adolescents in Montreal, Canada, regarding musculoskeletal health and participation in various activities. The students, all in grades 7-9, were assessed for neck or upper-limb (including upper back, shoulders, and arms) pain occurring at least weekly in the preceding six months.

Upper-limb pain appeared weekly in almost one-third of the students. Risk factors that increased the likelihood for neck/upper-limb pain were involvement in childcare (more than doubled risk); holding a job (nearly doubled risk); and lower mental health. In this study, involvement in sports or music was not associated with developing these forms of pain.

Interestingly, students were more likely to develop neck/upper-limb pain in the period from fall to spring, as opposed to spring to fall. It is possible that these types of pain are more common during the school year due to students toting heavy backpacks and facing the stress of struggling to make new friends and get good grades.

Reference:

Feldman DE, Shrier I, Rossignol M, et al. Risk factors for the development of neck and upper limb pain in adolescents. *Spine* 2002;27(5), pp. 523-528.

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