

Ergonomic awareness, practices and working conditions, and Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders among Health workers in the UAE.

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Background: Health professionals are at a higher risk of developing WMSD due to the nature of their work. Having good ergonomic awareness and practice with healthy working Environment are fundamental factors that promote workers well-being and safety at workplace.

Aim: The main purpose of the study was to assess the level of Ergonomic awareness and practice among health workers working in the UAE. The secondary objective was to determine the prevalence of Musculoskeletal disorder among the healthcare workers and its interaction with the working condition.

Method: Cross-sectional research method was used in this study. A total of 251 healthcare workers participated from both private and public Hospitals and clinics. These hospitals were selected based on convenience. The information was gathered via a self-administered questionnaire. The data was analysed using the statistical software SPSS-27. For categorical variables, the findings were expressed as frequency and percentage. The Chi-square test was performed to ascertain the association between independent and dependent variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient used to measure the linear correlation between Awareness and Practice level and Logistic regression test was also done. Statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$

Results: Out of 251, 217(88%) had Good Ergonomic Awareness level, however only 53 (23%) good practise level among the healthcare workers. There was a statistical significance between Awareness level and MSD; however, after adjusting the OR, it was not significant. No significance between WMSD and practice.

The Musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) prevalence among health workers was 89%. The prevalent complaint area reported was Neck (70%), low back (68%) and shoulder (65%). According to this study, Nurses 51% and physicians 17% were the most prevalent occupation followed by physiotherapists 7% and dentists 5%.

MSD was significantly associated with gender ($P < 0.05$). WMSD was also significantly associated with number of days working/week ($P < 0.05$), years of experience ($P < 0.05$), manual Handling ($P < 0.05$) and work posture ($P < 0.05$). Based on logistic regression, manual handling was the only factor significantly associated with MSD ($P < 0.05$).

Based on the regions, Spinal region was significantly associated with ($P < 0.01$), lower limb with not taking frequent breaks ($P < 0.01$) and Upper limb disorder was Significantly associated with POOR Practise level ($P < 0.01$).

The coefficient correlation between awareness and practice is 0.4, a weak positive correlation.

Conclusion: Ergonomics awareness was Good, but Practice of this knowledge was poor among the healthcare worker. The overall MSD prevalence was High. Environmental factors that contributed to increasing risk of MSD were Increased working hours, Manual handling of patients, working posture (such as long duration of sitting standing or walking) and not taking frequent breaks.

Recommendation: Developing comprehensive training programs that consisted of both knowledge and practical component of ergonomics and surveillance to monitor the implementation of the program.

Keywords: Ergonomics, Awareness level, Practise level, Musculoskeletal disorder, healthcare workers.