THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

THE PREVALENCE AND FACTORS FOR WORK-RELATED MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS AMONG PHYSIOTHERAPY PERSONNEL IN LUSAKA, KITWE AND NDOLA.

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ABSTRACT

Injuries at a work place comprise a substantial part of injury burden. They are an important public health problem that affects not only the person sustaining the injury but other household members that are dependent on the injured adult. Although, health workers frequently treat patients with work-related injuries, they also suffer from the same injuries. Injury rate among hospital workers is estimated to be twice that of other service industries. The cause is attributed to high levels of patient contact, as well as other variables in the health care environment. Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMDs) are common in the field of physiotherapy because the nature of job tasks is physically challenging and therapeutic procedures are often repetitive, labour intensive and involves direct contact with patients.

The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence and factors for WRMDs among physiotherapy personnel in Lusaka, Kitwe and Ndola districts. The objectives were to determine the proportion of physiotherapy personnel in Lusaka, Kitwe and Ndola that had experienced WRMDs, the extent to which work-load is associated to the development of WRMDs among physiotherapy personnel also, to establish the extent to which job tasks are associated to the development of WRMDs among physiotherapy personnel and to identify possible measures which could be put in place to reduce occurrence of WRMDs among physiotherapy personnel.

This was a cross-sectional quantitative study. Data was collected using a self- administered semi structured questionnaire and analysed using SPSS version 16.0. for windows**.** Association of factors was tested using the uncorrected Pearson's chi-square test. The cut off point for statistical significance, was set at 5%.

Most of the respondents (n=82) experienced WRMDs that lasted for more than 3 days in the last 12 months to the survey. The lower back was the most frequently affected body part. Onset of symptoms was gradual for the majority and their first episode was within five years of graduation.

WRMDs were common among physiotherapy personnel in Lusaka, Kitwe and Ndola. Outcomes reflects similar WRMDs, work factors and coping strategies for physiotherapists elsewhere. Therefore, it underlines the importance of further research with large sample sizes to examine factors associated with WRMDs and identify work practices that contribute to injury with a view to formulating preventive strategies.

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DECLARATION

I, **Loveness .A. Nkhata** declare that the work presented in this paper for the award of the Master of Public Health degree at the University of Zambia is my own. It has not been presented in part or wholly for a degree or diploma in any other university and is currently not being presented for any other degree. Further, i know that use of another's work and presenting it as my own is a an offence. Therefore, each significant quotation from the works of others has been cited and attributed as such.

Signed…… Date……

Loveness Nkhata. A.

Supervisor's Signature……... Date……

Prof. Seter Siziya

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Master of Public Health degree Programme at the University of Zambia.

Examiner..... Date.....

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Prof. Seter Siziya

Supervisor..... Date.....

Dr. Charles Michelo.

Signature..... Date.....

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	- Acquired Immuno- Deficiency Syndrome
CSO	- Central Statistical Office
EHC	- Evelyn Hone College
HIV	- Human Immuno Virus
HKPA	- Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association
ILO	- International Labour Organization
MOH	- Ministry of Health
NAC	- National Aids Council
PTP	- Physiotherapy personnel
UNZA	- University of Zambia
WHO	- World Health Organization
WRMDs	- Work-related musculoskeletal disorders
ZSP	- Zambia Society of Physiotherapy

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KEY WORDS

Musculoskeletal disorders

Occupational injury

Risk factors

Physiotherapy