

The prevalence and perceived contributing factors for work-related musculoskeletal disorders among nurses at the university teaching hospital in Lusaka, Zambia

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Introduction: Nurses routinely perform activities which are repetitive, labour intensive and involve direct contact with patients. Such activities have been shown to be risk factors for the development of work-related musculoskeletal disorders. The prevalence of these conditions amongst nurses in Zambia is not well established.

Objectives: The objectives of this study were to determine the prevalence of work-related musculoskeletal disorders within the last year among nurses at the University Teaching Hospital, Lusaka, Zambia, and to establish the demographic characteristics and perceived job tasks associated with this outcome.

Design: A cross sectional survey was undertaken. Stata version 12.0 was used to analyse the data. Associations between factors and the presence of work-related musculoskeletal disorders were tested using a multivariate logistic regression model. Odds

ratios and 95% confidence intervals were reported.

Main outcome: Prevalence of work-related musculoskeletal disorders.

Measures: Data were collected using a structured questionnaire.

Results: The 12-months period prevalence for work-related musculoskeletal disorders was 68.9% in 267 nurses who took part in the study (95% confidence interval 63.1-74.2). The ankles and feet were the most commonly affected body part 54.8% (n=101) followed by the low back 53.3% (n=98). Most respondents (44.7% n=93) had their first experience within five years of graduation. Decreased height, increased weight and years of professional experience, full time position, working in the same position for a long period and adjusting for bed height were among factors identified as associated with work-related musculoskeletal disorders.