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Low Back Pain and sedentary or non-sedentary work

Aims: to investigate the prevalence of Low Back Pain (LBP) among workers with a sedentary or non-sedentary job in a small Italian company.

LBP is the most common cause of pain within the general population, the second most common cause of days lost at work, and the cause which most frequently sets limits to daily life activities within the population younger than 45 years old.

Method: 55 employees went through an interview conducted according to a standardised questionnaire (The Nordic Questionnaire), collecting personal and morphometric data, and sedentary or non-sedentary activity in relation to the presence of LBP. Furthermore the questionnaire collects information about the characteristics of LBP in the past and during the last 12 months, such as severity, traumatic or occupational onset, and frequency.

Results: the 55 employees are divided according to their type of occupation (sedentary or non-sedentary), and according to the satisfaction they derive from their job (satisfied or not satisfied). Personal and morphometric data (age, sex, height, weight) did not show a significant statistical relation with the incidence of LBP. An equal result was found within the two groups of workers, 48% of the individuals with a sedentary job suffering from LBP, against 46,7% of those with non-sedentary work.

Among those with a sedentary job, 20% suffered from *severe* LBP, against 6,7% of those with a non-sedentary job.

Of all interviewed employees, 21 declared themselves satisfied with their job against 34 not satisfied; the results however showed a higher incidence of LBP among the satisfied group.

While the number of individuals with a sedentary job who have lost days from work because of LBP amounts to 24%, in the other group this number is 16,7%.

The incidence of chronic pain among the employee satisfied and not satisfied with their job is equal, 23,8% of those satisfied suffering from frequent episodes of LBP, against 23,5% of the individuals with no satisfaction from their job.

Conclusions: this study has shown the high incidence of LBP among the worker population, confirming that prevention is still lacking in the occupational environment.

Statistical data on the other hand did not show any significant relationship between psychosocial factors (such as satisfaction) and the incidence of LBP, nor between sedentary work and LBP.