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PREVALENCE OF MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS AMONG OFFICE WORKERS, NURSES AND CAREGIVERS IN ESTONIA

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Objectives We describe the prevalence of musculo-skeletal disorders (MSD) among Estonian office workers, nurses and caregivers.

Methods A postal survey was carried out in 2008, in course of international study “Cultural and Psychosocial Influences on Disability” (CUPID). The study group, office workers of Tartu University and Estonian University of Life Sciences and nurses of Tartu University Hospital and caregivers from Estonian hospitals and nursing centres, responded to the questions about MSD-s in past 12 months (low back, neck, shoulder, elbow, wrist/hand, knees).

Results The response rate for whole study group was 56% (n=643): office workers 59% (n=220), nurses 57% (n=237), caregivers 52% (n=186). Participants were in average age 40±11,5 years, 95% of them were female and 76% worked 40 h per week. Over the 12 months prior to the survey 33% of respondents had at least one MSD lasted 1–6 days and 66% reported an MSD present for at least 7 days. MSD prevalence by regions differed by occupation. The highest low back pain reported caregivers (63%), then nurses (55%) and office workers (42%) (p<0.0001). The highest wrist/hand pain had office workers (p<0.006). Of the MSD-s 1321 reported by 643 respondents, only 139 (10,5%) took time off work and more often caregivers (p<0.0001). Age, gender, ethnicity, working hours and experience didn't influence the prevalence of MSDs.

Conclusions The prevalence of low back pain was highest for caregivers and/hand wrist pain for office workers. In most part pain lasted longer than 7 days but time off work was taken rare.