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CHRONIC WIDESPREAD PAIN (CWP) AND OTHER MUSCULOSKELETAL PROBLEMS AMONG FEMALE TEA FACTORY WORKERS IN AKURESSA, SRI LANKA

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Objectives Ceylon tea is the main traditional export of Sri Lanka. Most of the workers in tea factories are females. It has been reported that these females are commonly complaining musculoskeletal pain in multiple sites of the body. However this problem has not been studied systematically. Therefore, this research was carried out with the objective of study the CWP and other musculoskeletal problems among the female tea factory workers in Akuressa, Sri Lanka.

Methods This study was carried out among a random sample of female workers, working in tea factories in Akuressa, Sri Lanka. A criterion given in the “Manchester Definition” for CWP was used for the identification of CWP. Data was collected by medically qualified research assistants using a structured questionnaire.

Results Four hundred female workers participated in the study. Mean age of workers was 38.25 years with the range of 19–57 years. Most (61.5%) had an education only up to grade 5. Mean duration of work in tea factories is 15.55. 24.25% of workers were found to have CWP. Back pain was the most prevalent (20.25%) individual musculoskeletal problem. Other reported problems include ankle pain (12.75%), knee pain (13.75%), neck pain (8.25%), shoulder pain (17.25%) and wrist pain (13.5%).

Conclusions Female tea factory workers in Sri Lanka report a variety of musculoskeletal health problems. Almost one fourth of workers were found to have CWP. Long term follow-up studies for identify the risk factors of developing musculoskeletal problems of these workers is therefore warranted.