Abstract

Objective: This cross-sectional study aimed at analyzing: 1. the main musculoskeletal symptoms (MSS) presented by hospital nursing workers and; 2. personal, occupational, and health factors related to MSS among them. Method: Two questionnaires were filled in by 245 nurse technicians (NTs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs) (response rate 95%) associated with direct patient care sectors from a hospital. These questionnaires were: the standardized version of the Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire (NMQ) and one including questions on 15 demographic independent variables potentially related to outcomes from the NMQ. Univariate analyses and binary logistic regression analyses were performed to identify which variables would explain the occurrence of MSS in different body regions. Results: The low back (57%), shoulder (52%), and neck (48%) were identified as the most affected regions. The logistic regression analysis showed that low back symptoms in the last 12 months were significantly associated with LPN activities (OR=2.36; CI=1.24-4.5) and previous sick leave due to MSS (OR=5.97; CI=1.2-29.1). Smoking was significantly associated with symptoms in the low back (OR=2.77; CI=1.13-6.8) and thoracic spine (OR=2.37; CI=1.04-5.40). Physical exercise showed a protective effect on the cervical spine (OR=0.42; CI=0.23-0.77). Previous sick leave was significantly associated with pain in the knees (OR=4.24; CI=1.33-13.5) and in the upper limbs (OR=5.36; CI=1.07-26.7). Conclusions: The nursing workers who were evaluated presented a high prevalence of MSS. Previous history of sick leave was strongly associated with the presence of symptoms in various body regions. These results indicate the need for preventive programs in the hospital environment in order to control more severe MSS in nursing professionals.

Keywords

occupational health; epidemiology; exercise; physical therapy.