Abstract
Objective: the aim was to evaluate the association between the intensity of musculoskeletal pain and reduction in work ability among nursing workers. Method: a cross-sectional study, involving 592 nursing staff in a public university hospital in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The Brazilian version of the Finnish questionnaire for calculating Work Ability Index was used, whose score varies from 7 to 49 points. The score was dichotomized as reduced work ability (7 to 36 points) and good/excellent ability (37 to 49 points). The intensity of musculoskeletal pain over the previous week was evaluated, using a numerical pain scale. Result: 43.3% of the participants had reduced work ability and 48.8% reported strong to unbearable pain. Even after adjusting for potentially confounding factors (function and length of service in the function), the workers who mentioned strong to unbearable pain were four times more likely to be classified in the group with reduced work ability. Conclusion: A positive association was determined between intensity of musculoskeletal pain and reduction in work ability. It is necessary to adopt intervention measures in the organizational structure, so as to promote/restore work ability.

Keywords
Nursing, Occupational Health, Work Capacity Evaluation, Cumulative Trauma Disorders, Pain.