

Work-Related Psychosocial Factors and the Risk of Musculoskeletal Disorders

謝瀛華

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摘要

Abstract

While the etiologic mechanisms are poorly understood, there is increasing evidence that psychosocial factors related to the job and work environment play a role in the development of work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) of the upper extremity and back. Though the findings of the studies reviewed are not entirely consistent, they suggest that perceptions of intensified workload, monotonous work, limited job control, low job clarity, and low social support are associated with various work-related musculoskeletal disorders.

As some of these factors are seemingly unrelated to physical demands, and a number of studies have found associations even after adjusting for physical demands, the effects of these factors on MSDs may be, in part or entirely, independent of physical factors. It is also evident that these associations are not limited to particular types of jobs (e.g., video display terminal work [VDT]) or work environments (e.g., offices) but, rather, seem to be found in a variety of work situations. This seems to suggest that psychosocial factors may represent generalized risk factors for work-related MSDs. These factors, while statistically significant in some studies, generally have only modest strength.

At present, two of the difficulties in determining the relative importance of the physical and psychosocial factors are: (1) psychosocial factors are usually measured at the individual level, while physical factors are more often measured at the group (e.g., job or task) level and often by methods with limited precision or accuracy and (2) "objective measures" of aspects of the psychosocial work environment are difficult to develop and are rarely used, while objective methods to measure the physical environment are more readily available. Until we can measure most workplace and individual variables with more comparable techniques, it will be hard to determine precisely their relative importance.