

Prevalence and Risk Factors of Musculoskeletal Disorders among Physical Therapist's Seniors versus Internship Students

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Abstract : Background: Physical therapists are knowledgeable in treatment and prevention of musculoskeletal injuries; however, they have occupational musculoskeletal injuries because Physical therapy profession requires effort that may lead to work-related musculoskeletal disorders. No previous studies among physical therapists have been reported in Egypt. We aim to assess the prevalence and risk factors of musculoskeletal disorders among physical therapist's seniors versus internship students. Method: We conducted a cross-sectional study in faculty of physical therapy Cairo university Prevalence and risk factors of musculoskeletal injuries were assessed using self-administered questionnaire with closed-ended questions. Seniors therapist was defined as a physical therapist with more than 5 years of work experience. Data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 for Windows. Results: The study included 106 physical therapists (Junior = 72; senior = 34), the mean age of senior therapists was 30.1 (SD 6.3) years and junior therapists were 22.8 (SD 2.4). Female subjects constituted 83.9% of the studied sample. The mean hours of contact with patients was higher among junior therapists 6.4 (SD 2.6) vs. 5.7 (SD 2.1) among senior therapists. The prevalence of a musculoskeletal injury, once or more in their lifetime, was significantly higher among senior therapists (86% vs. 66.7%; $p = 0.04$). The highest risk factor in increasing the symptoms of the injury among junior therapists was maintaining a position for a prolonged period of time at 28% while performing manual therapy techniques was the highest risk factor among senior therapists at 32%. 53% of senior therapists have limited their patient contact time as a result of their injury in comparison to 25% of junior therapists ($p = 0.09$). Conclusion: the presented study shows that the prevalence of musculoskeletal injuries, once or more in their lifetime, is significantly higher among senior therapists.

Keywords : musculoskeletal injuries, occupational injuries, physical therapists, work related disorders

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