

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

EUROPEAN RISK OBSERVATORY REPORT

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Annex to Report:
Lifting postures – Facts and figures

National Report: Austria

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This document is an annex to the Agency's Report "Work-related musculoskeletal disorders – Facts and figures" - Austria

You can find the full report –in English only- on the Agency's website:

<http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/TERO09009ENview>

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Summary

Results from the Fourth European Survey on Working Conditions (ESWC) show that, in 2005, 13.3% of Austrian workers (EU 27 average: 9.7%) reported carrying or moving heavy loads all or almost all of the time. Work in painful positions all or almost all of the time was reported by 16.9% of Austrian workers (EU 27 average: 15.8%) while nearly one third (32.2%) of Austrian workers reported repetitive hand or arm movements all or almost all of the time (EU 27 average: 33.7%).

The age group 25-39 reports the highest exposure rates to carrying or moving heavy loads, work in painful or tiring positions and repetitive hand or arm movements. In any case, and concerning repetitive hand or arm movements, young workers aged 15 to 24 years old have witnessed a remarkable increase in their continuous exposure (all or almost all of the time) between 1995 (22.4%) and 2005 (33.9%).

Men are more exposed to carrying or moving heavy loads but women report higher exposure rates to painful or tiring positions and repetitive hand or arm movements.

Skilled agricultural and fishery workers, craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers and workers in elementary occupations are the most affected occupational groups with the highest percentages of people carrying or moving heavy loads and working in painful or tiring positions all or almost all the time.

Information by sector reveals that workers in agriculture and fisheries and construction report high exposure rates to all three indicators: carrying or moving heavy loads, painful or tiring positions and repetitive hand or arm movements. Meanwhile, hotels and restaurants and transports and communications report particularly high shares of continuous exposure (all or almost all of the time) to repetitive hand or arm movements.

In general it can be seen that the continuous exposure to repetitive hand or arm movements is higher than the exposure to carrying or moving loads and to working in painful or tiring positions for most activity sectors except for agriculture and fisheries and construction.

Finally, and by employment status, continuous exposure to carrying or moving heavy loads and to working in painful or tiring positions is very similar between self-employed and employees in Austria while exposure to repetitive hand or arm movements is more frequent among employees than self-employed.

Source description

Title	European Survey on Working Conditions
Acronym	ESWC
Institution	European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions (Dublin)
Country	EU
Periodicity	Every five years 1990-1995-2000-2005
Type	Employee Survey
URL	http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/working/surveys/index.htm
Demographic group	Employees, self-employed without personnel and self-employed with less than 10 employees
Objectives	<p>Monitoring of trends in working conditions for employees and the self-employed throughout the European Union.</p> <p>This Survey provides an opportunity to monitor working conditions in the EU and to analyze specific themes in depth, such as: sector differences, working conditions and gender, age, or employment contracts, work organization, working hours, etc.</p>
Description	Face-to face interviews in all EU countries, with approx. 1,000 people in each country are selected (random walk), structured questionnaire
Content	This survey describes a broad range of questions in the field of working conditions.
Question	<p>Q11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a) Does your work involve painful or tiring positions? - c) Does your work involve carrying or moving heavy loads? - e) Does your work involve repetitive hand or arm movements?

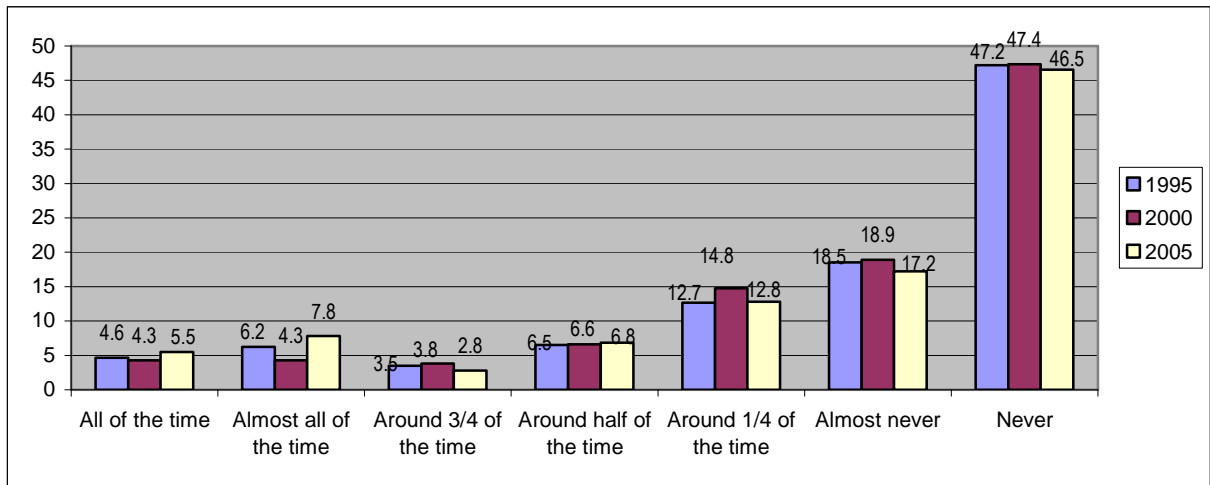
1. General prevalence

Carrying or moving heavy loads, painful or tiring positions and repetitive hand or arm movements are the analysed indicators as factors that may lead to work related MSDs.

Results from the Fourth European Survey on Working Conditions (ESWC) show that, in 2005, 13.3% of Austrian workers (EU average: 9.7%) reported carrying or moving heavy loads all or almost all of the time, a share that has increased from previous surveys: 10.8% in 1995 and 8.6% in 2000.

The percentage of workers who carry or move heavy loads at least a quarter of their time in Austria was 35.7% in 2005, while those who never carry or move heavy loads represent 46.5% of all workers.

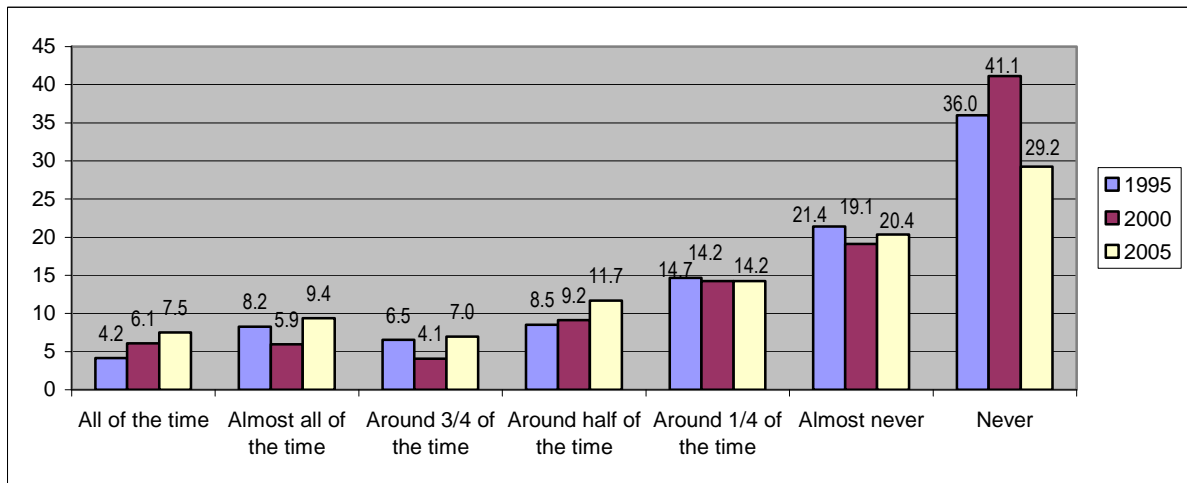
Figure 1: Percentage workers carrying or moving heavy loads, 1995, 2000, 2005



European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

Further results from the ESWC reveal that 16.9% of Austrian workers reported working in painful or tiring positions all or almost all of the time (EU 27 average: 15.8%) as opposed to 12.4% in 1995 and 12% in 2000. Almost half of all Austrian workers (49.8%) reported working in painful or tiring positions at least 25% of their working time in 2005, a percentage that has increased too from 42.1% in 1995 and 39.5% in 2000.

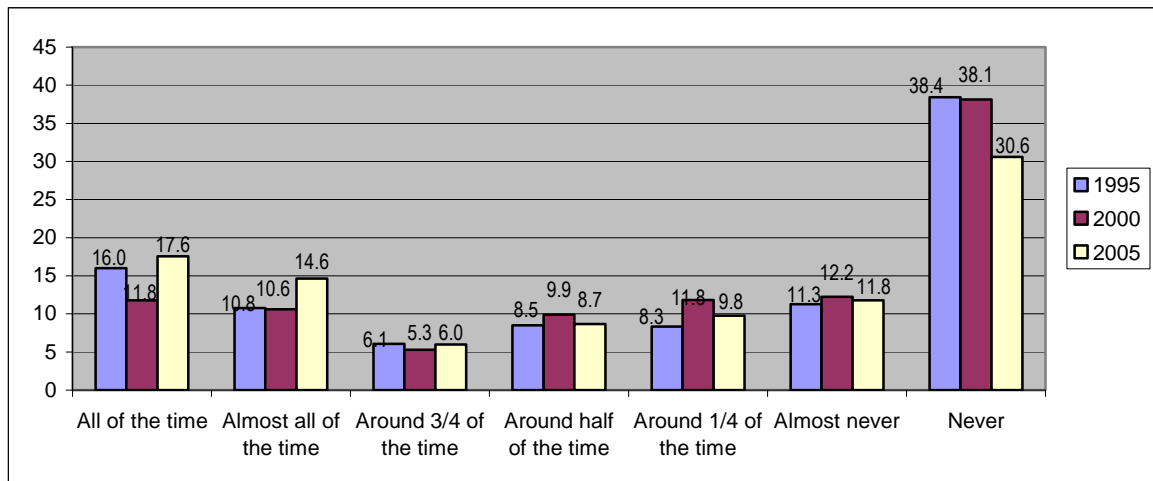
Figure 2: Percentage workers working in painful or tiring positions, 1995, 2000, 2005



European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

Finally, nearly one third (32.2%) of Austrian workers report repetitive hand or arm movements all or almost all of the time (EU 27 average: 33.7%), up from 26.8% in 1995 and 22.4% in 2000. More than half of workers (56.7%) are exposed to repetitive hand or arm movements at least 25% of the time, a share that represents an increase from 49.7% in 1995 and 49.4% in 2000.

Figure 3: Percentage workers reporting repetitive hand or arm movements, 1995, 2000, 2005



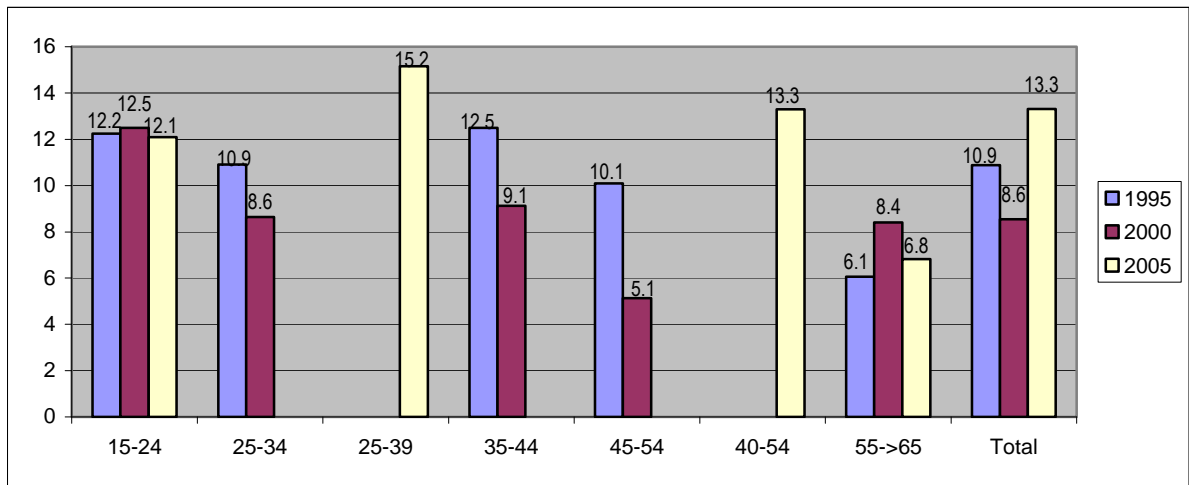
European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

2. By age

The age group 25-39 reports the highest exposure rates to carrying or moving heavy loads, work in painful or tiring positions and repetitive hand or arm movements.

Starting with carrying or moving heavy loads, workers in the 25-39 age group are the most exposed as 15.2% of them carry or move heavy loads all or almost all of the time in 2005. They are followed by those in the 40-54 age category (13.3%) and young workers aged 15-24 (12.1%). An analysis of the evolution in time is difficult due to the different age breakdown in 2005, but overall it can be seen that exposure to carrying or moving heavy loads has increased among the middle groups, that is, the former 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 categories, which are the current 25-39 and 40-54.

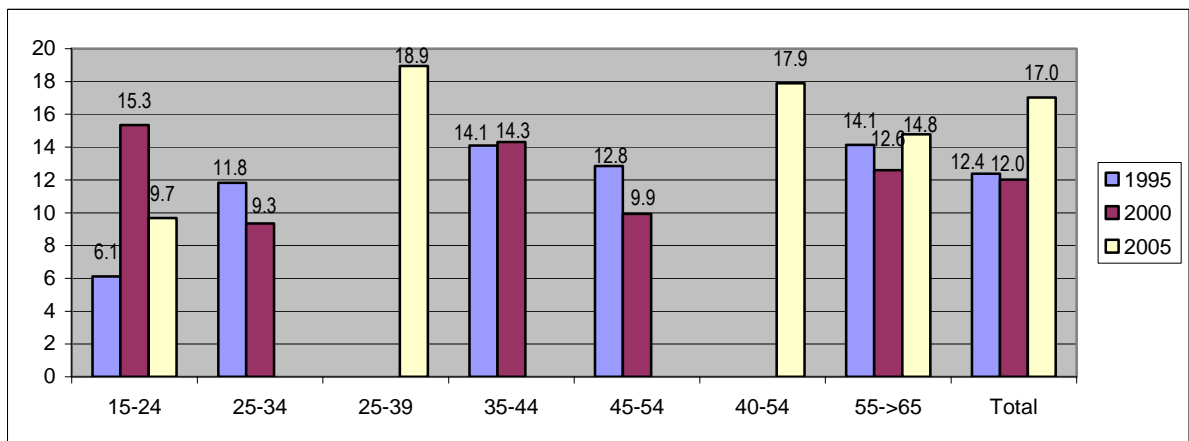
Figure 4: Percentage workers carrying or moving heavy loads all or almost all the time, by age, 1995, 2000, 2005



European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

As far as painful or tiring positions are concerned, again, those in the 25-39 age group report the highest exposure: 18.9% all or almost all of the time, followed closely by workers age 40-54, 17.9% of whom report to work in painful or tiring positions all or almost all of the time. Evolution in time reveals an increase in the continuous exposure (all or almost all of the time) among all age groups except young workers.

Figure 5: Percentage workers working in painful or tiring positions all or almost all the time, by age, 1995, 2000, 2005

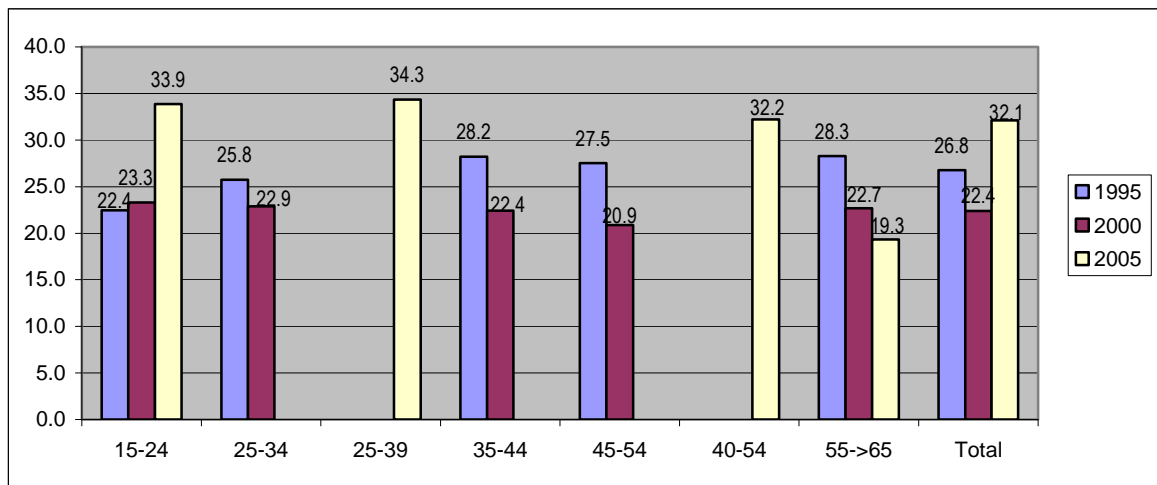


European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

Finally, regarding repetitive hand or arm movements, and similarly to the other factors that may well lead to MSDs, the age group 25-39 reports the highest share of workers with repetitive hand or arm movements at work all or almost all of the time (34.3%), followed closely by young workers aged 15 to 24 (33.9%).

Precisely young workers have witnessed a remarkable increase in their exposure to continuous (all or almost all of the time) repetitive hand or arm movements between 1995 (22.4%) and 2005 (33.9%). Exposure has risen across all age groups except the oldest, aged 55 to 65, where the share of workers reporting repetitive hand or arm movement all or almost all of the time has dropped from 28.3% in 1995 to 19.3% in 2005.

Figure 6: Percentage workers reporting repetitive hand or arm movements all or almost all the time, by age, 1995, 2000, 2005



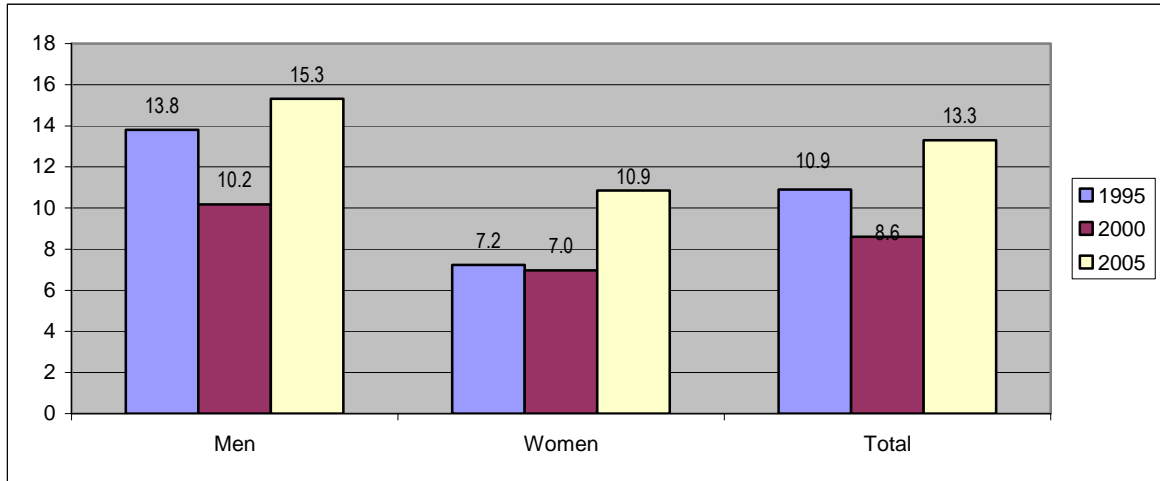
European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

3. By gender

Men are more exposed to carrying or moving heavy loads all or almost all the time but women report higher exposure rates to painful or tiring positions and repetitive hand or arm movements.

15.3% of Austrian men report carrying or moving heavy loads all or almost all of the time in 2005. The share among women is lower (10.9%) but both genders have experienced an increase in their respective exposure rates.

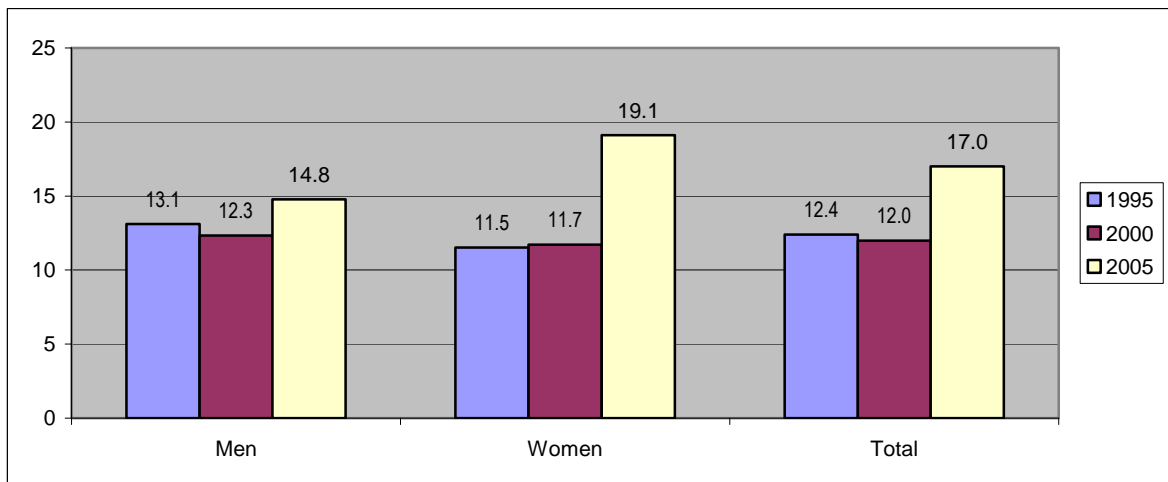
Figure 7: Percentage workers carrying or moving heavy loads all or almost all the time, by gender, 1995, 2000, 2005



European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

When it comes to painful or tiring positions, Austrian women reported a greater continuous exposure (all or almost all of the time) than their male counterparts in 2005: 19.1% and 14.8%, respectively. Again, there has been an increase in time in the rates of exposure for both genders, which has been more acute among women than men.

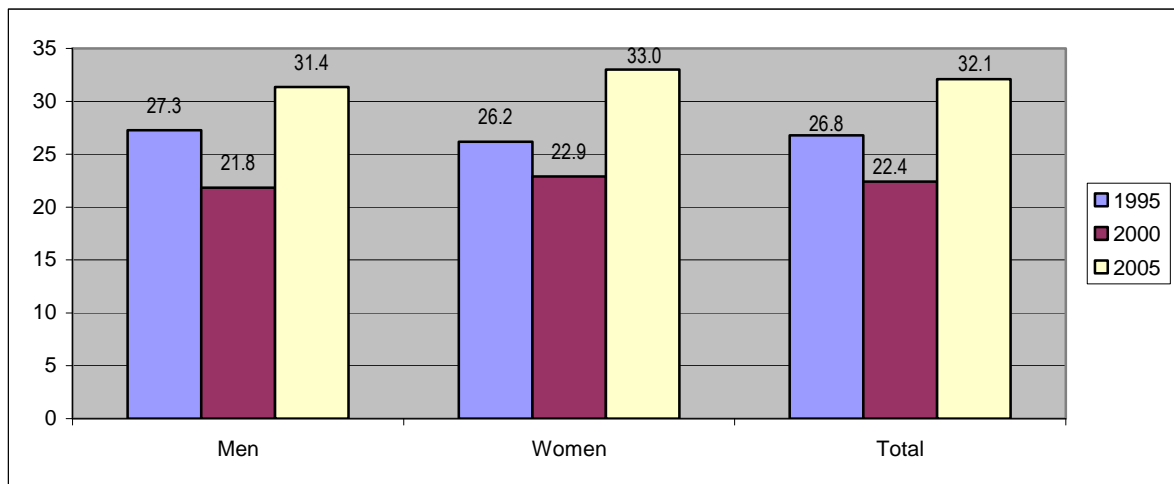
Figure 8: Percentage workers working in painful or tiring positions all or almost all the time, by gender, 1995, 2000, 2005



European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

Finally, exposure to repetitive hand or arm movements in Austria seems to be more frequent among women than men too. As shown in the graph below, one third of women (33%) reported repetitive hand or arm movements all or almost all of the time, a slightly greater percentage than that found among men: 31.4%. Similarly to the other indicators, both genders have witnessed an increase in time in their continuous exposure to repetitive hand or arm movements at work.

Figure 9: Percentage workers reporting repetitive hand or arm movements all or almost all the time, by gender, 1995, 2000, 2005



European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

4. By sector

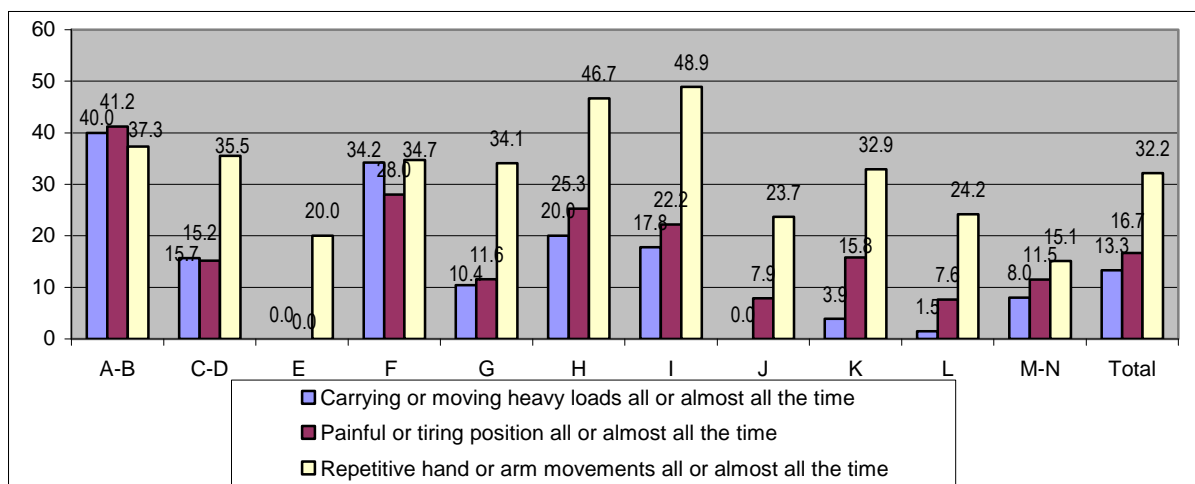
Sector groups (sections in NACE Rev 1.1) used in figures:

- A: Agriculture, hunting, forestry
- B: Fishing
- C: Mining
- D: Manufacturing
- E: Electricity, gas and water
- F: Construction
- G: Wholesale and retail, repairs
- H: Hotels and restaurants
- I: Transport and communication
- J: Financial intermediation
- K: Real estate, business activity
- L: Public administration and defence
- M: Education
- N: Health and social work
- O: Other community, social and personal service activities
- P: Activities of households
- Q: Extra-territorial organizations and bodies

The ESWC information broken down by sector for Austria reveals that workers in agriculture and fisheries report high exposure rates to all three indicators: carrying or moving heavy loads (40%), painful or tiring positions (41.2%) and repetitive hand or arm movements (37.3%). Construction too is one of the sectors with the highest exposure rates for all three indicators, while hotels and restaurants and transports and communications report particularly high shares of continuous exposure (all or almost all of the time) to repetitive hand or arm movements: 46.7% and 48.9%, respectively.

In general it can be seen that the continuous exposure (all or almost all of the time) to repetitive hand or arm movements is higher than the exposure to carrying or moving loads and to working in painful or tiring positions for most activity sectors except for agriculture and fisheries and construction.

Figure 10: Percentage workers carrying/moving heavy loads, working in painful/tiring positions and with repetitive hand/arm movements all or almost all the time, by sector, 2005



European Survey on Working Conditions, 2005

5. By occupation

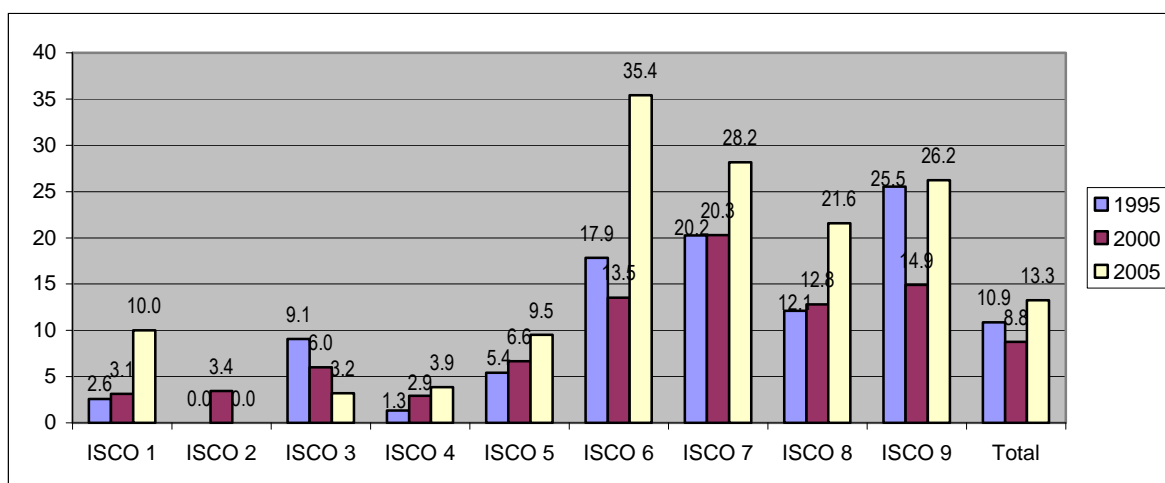
ISCO Groups of occupation used in tables and figures:

- ISCO 1: Legislators, senior officials and managers
- ISCO 2: Professionals
- ISCO 3: Technicians and associate professionals
- ISCO 4: Clerks
- ISCO 5: Service workers and shop and market sales workers
- ISCO 6: Skilled agricultural and fishery workers
- ISCO 7: Craft and related trades workers
- ISCO 8: Plant and machine operators and assemblers
- ISCO 9: Elementary occupations
- ISCO 10: Armed force

Skilled agricultural and fishery workers, craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers and, finally, workers in elementary occupations are the most affected occupational groups with the highest percentages of people carrying or moving heavy loads and working in painful or tiring positions all the time or almost all the time.

Starting with continuous exposure (all or almost all of the time) to carrying or moving heavy loads, as mentioned above, it is found to be highest among skilled agricultural and fishery workers (35.4%), craft and related trades workers (28.2%), workers in elementary occupations (26.2%) and plant and machine operators and assemblers (21.6%). Most occupational groups have experienced an increase in their exposure to carrying or moving heavy loads in recent times.

Figure 11: Percentage workers carrying or moving heavy loads all or almost all the time, by occupation, 1995, 2000, 2005

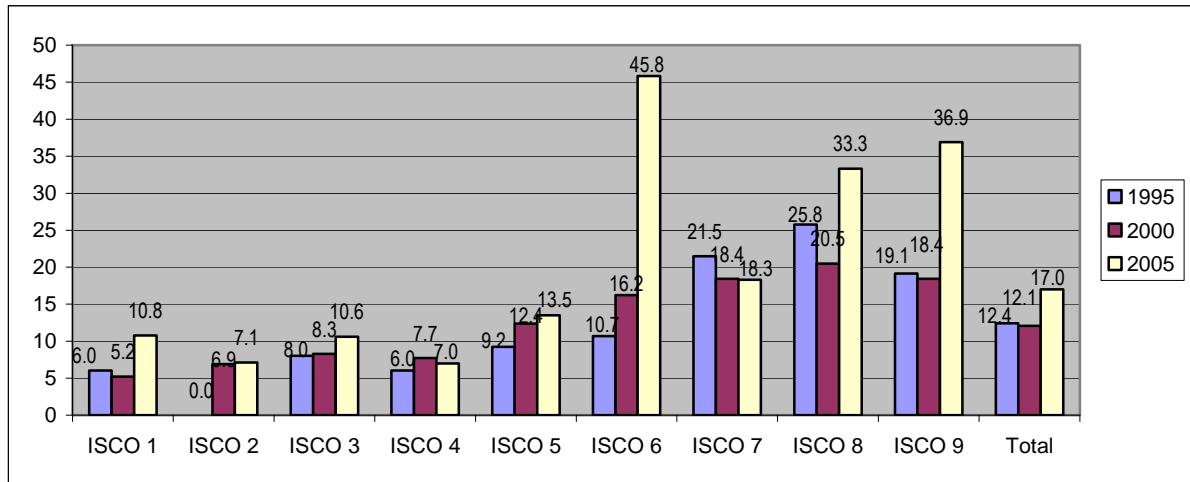


European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

As far as working in painful or tiring positions is concerned, again the most exposed occupational groups are the same as those that were most affected by carrying or moving heavy loads: skilled agricultural and fishery workers (45.8% all or almost all of the time), workers in elementary

occupations (36.9%), plant and machine operators and assemblers (33.3%) and craft and related trades workers (18.3%). Again, an increase in the continuous exposure to painful or tiring position at work has been witnessed among most occupational groups.

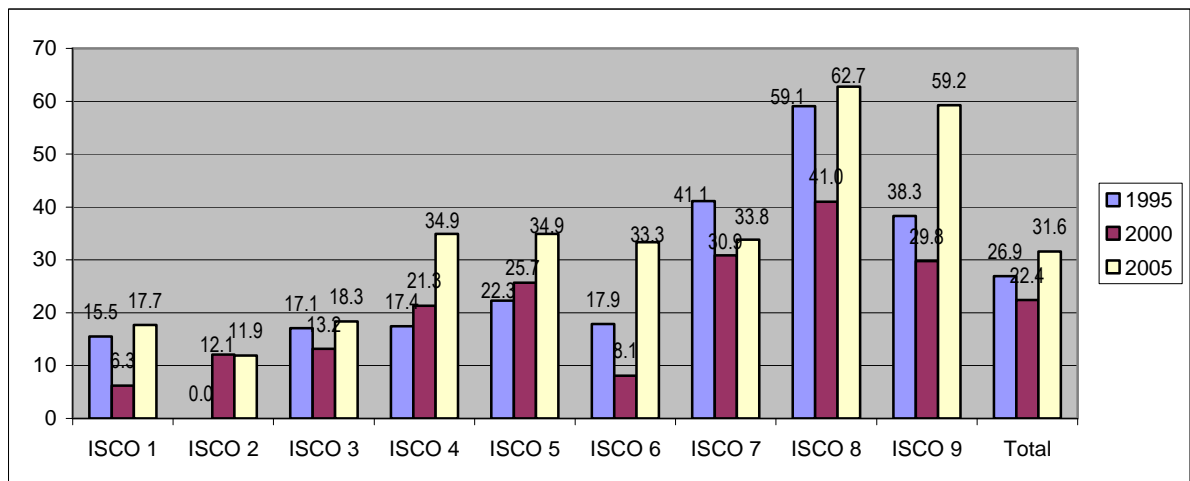
Figure 12: Percentage workers working in painful or tiring positions all or almost all the time, by occupation, 1995, 2000, 2005



European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

Concerning repetitive hand or arm movements, continuous exposure (all or almost all of the time) is found to be highest among plant and machine operators and assemblers (62.7%) and workers in elementary occupations (59.2%). As it was the case with both carrying or moving heavy loads and working in painful or tiring positions, most occupational groups have experienced an increase in their respective exposure rates to repetitive hand or arm movements.

Figure 13: Percentage workers reporting repetitive hand or arm movements all or almost all the time, by occupation, 1995, 2000, 2005

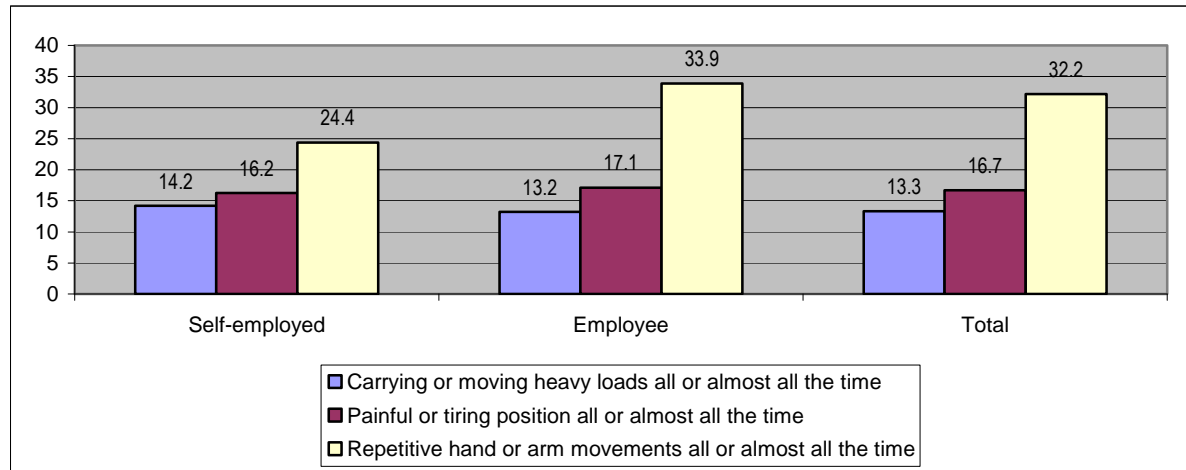


European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, 2000, 2005

6. By economic status

Finally, the analysis of the ESWC information by employment status shows that the continuous exposure (all or almost all of the time) to carrying or moving heavy loads and to working in painful or tiring positions is very similar between self-employed and employees in Austria in 2005. Meanwhile, exposure to repetitive hand or arm movements is more frequent among employees than self-employed: 33.9% and 24.4%, respectively.

Figure 14: Percentage workers carrying/moving heavy loads, working in painful/tiring positions and with repetitive hand/arm movements all or almost all the time, by sector, 2005



European Survey on Working Conditions, 2005