MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR

Risk factors and practical solutions

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Safety and health at work is everyone’s concern. It’s good for you. It’s good for business.
Introduction

Healthcare sector ~10%

Total workforce of the EU

Life expectancy

1980

2020
Size of the problem
MSDs and risk factors

1. European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS)
2. European Surveys of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER)
The prevalence of MSD is high in the healthcare sector

EWCS (2015)
Risk factors for musculoskeletal disorders – review of the literature

- Physical workload
- Individual factors
- Organisational and psychosocial factors

MSDs
Prevalence of risk factors

Difficult customers
Repetitive hand or arm movements
Time pressure
Lifting or moving people or heavy loads
Tiring or painful positions
Long or irregular working hours
Poor communication or cooperation

Physical and psychosocial risk factors are more prevalent and have increased more from 2014-2019 in the healthcare sector* than in other sectors

ESENER-2 (2014) and ESENER-3 (2019)

http://osha.europa.eu

*) Human health and social work activities
Health & Safety efforts

Risk assessment
Regular risk assessment

Percentage of establishments in the EU-27 that carried out a regular risk assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2014 Percentage</th>
<th>2019 Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sectors</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESENER-2 (2014) and ESENER-3 (2019)

http://osha.europa.eu
## Reasons for difficulties in addressing health and safety

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The complexity of legal obligations</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The paperwork</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A lack of time or staff</strong></td>
<td><strong>29%</strong></td>
<td><strong>41%</strong></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of money</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of awareness among staff</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of expertise or specialist support</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of awareness among management</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although more than 3 out of 4 establishments in the healthcare sector of the EU-27 performs regular risk assessment, many experience trouble in addressing health and safety.

*ESENER-2 (2014) and ESENER-3 (2019)*

http://osha.europa.eu
Protective approaches
Protective approaches

Organisational safety culture

Reduce the physical workload and strengthen the body to prevent and reduce MSDs.
The healthcare sector is already good at involving employees in dealing with psychosocial risk. This can also be done with risk factors for MSDs.

### Types of employee representation across establishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Representation</th>
<th>Healthcare</th>
<th>All sectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works council</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union representation</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety committee</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety representative</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESENER-2 (2014) and ESENER-3 (2019)
Thank you for your attention

**Musculoskeletal disorders in the healthcare sector**

*Type: Discussion papers*

21/06/2020

A growing care burden, recruitment difficulties and an ageing workforce mean that musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are likely to become an increasingly difficult occupational safety and health challenge in the healthcare sector.

This discussion paper reviews the literature on musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in healthcare workplaces. It presents an overview of MSDs and their prevalence in the healthcare sector, reviews the risk factors and discusses effective interventions to prevent, reduce and manage MSDs in healthcare workplaces.

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