Assessment risk of work-related musculoskeletal disorders according to the RULA method in Nurses

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Background

In what concerns Occupational Health, the most recurrent injuries are musculoskeletal disorders, which are frequently associated with risk factors, such as, repetition of the task and handling of loads. Among health professionals, nurses are the most affected.

Objective

This study evaluates work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) in nurses from a central hospital, using the Rapid Upper Limb Assessment (RULA) method.

Methods

This is an observational, cross-sectional study with a sample of 34 nurses from the surgery department. Collections were made through the observation of tasks performed by nurses when applying the RULA. The final score was associated with the need for intervention, for prevention of WMSDs varying between 1 and 7; no intervention is required and immediate intervention is required, respectively. Descriptive analysisof the partial and final scores, as well as the Mann-Whitney test, the Fisher exact test and the chi- square test were performed.

Results

The tasks with the highest risk were bed hygiene and transfers. Among the evaluated tasks, the majority of the final scores obtained were 6 and 7, which refers to a need for intervention soon or immediately, respectively. There were no significant associations between the risk of injury and gender, age or length of service.

Conclusions

It was concluded that most of the tasks performed by nurses presented a high final score, according to the RULA method, and the body segments with the highest risk are shoulders, neck and trunk, suggesting the need for immediate intervention.

Keywords

Musculoskeletal disorders, RULA, Occupational Health.