



FACTORS AFFECTING LOW BACK PAIN AMONG THEATRE NURSES AT THE NATIONAL HOSPITAL OF SRI LANKA

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Low Back Pain (LBP) is one of the most common occupation related diseases that occurs among theatre nurses providing comprehensive care in a specialized unit. The present study was aimed at examining the reasons for LBP among operating theatre nurses at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka (NHSL). This was a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted among 200 permanently employed nurses working in operating theatres at the NHSL in early 2018. Nurses from both genders suffering from LBP and those were permanently employed for more than two years in the operation theatres were included in the study. A content validated, pre-tested, self-administered questionnaire was completed by 153 nurses who volunteered for the study. This study was approved by the Ethics Review Committee of the NHSL. All the participants signed an informed consent prior to participating in the study.

The majority (96 %) of nurses were females and aged between 31-40 years. A majority of the participants had not engaged in any exercises. Most of the nurses had been working 5-10 years as a theatre nurse (45 %) and almost two-thirds of them did more than 200 duty hours per month. Most nurses used public transport to travel to work. Most of the nurses with LBP maintained a standing position for long periods (81 %), transferred heavy patients between operation table and trolley (76.6 %) and frequently lifted patients and equipment (80 %). Nurses with LBP also experienced work demand (74 %), shortage of staff (78 %) and no breaks between working hours (74%). Nurses' traveling mode, absence of regular exercises, increased duration of working hours and years in the theatre, remaining in a standing position for long periods transferring of heavy patients and lifting patients equipment frequently seems to be connected with their LBP. Further, high work demand, shortage of staff and no breaks during working hours were linked with increasing LBP among these nurses. As nurses work in operating theatres experience LBP, it is necessary to have individual and institutional precautions in order to prevent LPB among this group.

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