CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN AMONG QUEBEC POLICE OFFICERS: A WEB-BASED CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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INTRODUCTION / AIM

Police officers are known to present work-related ergonomic factors associated with low back pain (LBP). The objective of this study was to describe the prevalence and burden of chronic low back pain (CLBP) in these workers.

METHODS

Between May and October 2014, a web-based cross-sectional study was conducted among police officers working in the province of Quebec (Canada). Twenty-five police organizations accepted to disseminate the email invitation to their members.

RESULTS

A total of 3589 police officers completed the questionnaire. The mean age of respondents was 38.5 ±8.7 years, 32.0% were women, and 67.4% were patrol officers. A majority reported LBP symptoms in the past 12 months (67.7%) and 96.6% of them perceived that presence of LBP was totally/partially linked to their work in the police force. Prevalence of CLBP among all responders (self-reported LBP for ≥3 months) was 28.7%. Police officers reporting CLBP, as compared to those reporting acute or subacute LBP symptoms in the past 12 months, were more likely to report LBP-related reduction of work activities (64.4% vs 45.7%; p<.001) or more working days lost in the past year (average of 11.9 ±43.5 vs 1.5 ±9.8; p<.001). A greater proportion also reported LBP-related health care visits in the past year (86.2% vs 64.2%; p<.001) or current use of pain medications and complementary alternative medicines (90.1% vs 69.7%; p<.001).

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSIONS

CLBP is a frequent and burdensome condition among Quebec police officers. Our results underline the importance for police organizations to promote CLBP prevention and to implement workplace management programs.

OTHER AUTHORS

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