15 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHOULDER DISORDERS AND INSTRUMENT GROUP IN PROFESSIONAL AUSTRALIAN ORCHESTRAL MUSICIANS

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Background Professional musicians have high rates of musculoskeletal disorders, but few studies have analysed the risk of shoulder pain and injury by instrument group and work environment.

Aims/Objectives/Purpose To assess the prevalence and impact of shoulder pain and injury, and its relation to instrument group, in professional musicians from Australian orchestras.

Methods 374 musicians from six professional Australian orchestras completed a physical examination and cross-sectional questionnaire concerning their demographics, duties and physical activities at work. The outcome variable, left and right shoulder pain and injury, was assessed using a subjective pain score—the visual analogue scale—and objective physical examination. Prevalence rates were estimated and associations with risk factors assessed by logistic regression.

Results/Outcomes Shoulder pain and injury is common amongst professional orchestral musicians. The overall estimate for right and left shoulder pain was 19% and 12% respectively. There was an association between right shoulder injury and instrument group. Woodwind (OR 2.22 95%; CI 0.99 to 5.00) and upper string musicians (OR 2.28; 95% CI 1.02 to 5.09) had a significantly higher OR when compared to brass players.

Significance/Contribution to the Field The findings reinforce the fact that shoulder disorders are common amongst professional orchestral musicians and highlight the need for prospective research into the occupational exposures that contribute to this problem.