

# WORK-RELATED MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS IN CHINA, PREVALENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL FACTORS

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**Background** School teachers represent an occupational group among which there appears to be a high prevalence of work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs). Epidemiological data on WMSDs in Chinese teachers are limited.

**Objective** To investigate the prevalence of and associated factors for WMSDs among school teachers.

**Methods** In a cross-sectional study of teachers from seven schools, the prevalence of WMSDs during the 12-month period was assessed according to the Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire.

**Results** The response rate was 85.0% (893/1050). 59.5% reported at least one WMSDs. The 1 year prevalence of WMSDs of the neck, shoulder, low back, wrist/hand, elbow, and knee amongst teachers were 42.0, 35.9, 45.6, 20.9, 12.3 and 22.6%, respectively. The prevalence of WMSDs in the senior middle school teachers was significantly higher than that in the primary school and junior middle school teachers. Uncomfortable back support was associated with low back (OR 1.62, 95% CI 1.13 to 2.32), neck/shoulder (OR 1.77, 95% CI 1.23 to 2.55), elbow (OR 2.17, 95% CI 1.28 to 3.66) and knee pain (OR 1.98, 95% CI 1.30 to 2.03). Prolonged static posture had the strongest association with neck/shoulder (OR 2.25, 95% CI 1.56 to 3.24), wrist/hand (OR 2.33, 95% CI 1.46 to 3.71) and knee pain (OR 2.14 95% CI 1.360 to 3.37). Prolonged sitting was also associated with WMSDs at most sites. Posture characterised by twisting was associated with low back pain alone.

**Significance** WMSDs are common among teachers. There were strong associations with occupational factors.