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## A pilot investigation of the occupational functioning, activity limitations, and participation restrictions of Malaysian workers with musculoskeletal disorders

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This study aimed to explore perceived occupational competence of Malaysian workers with work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and to see if this was associated with activity limitations and participation restrictions.

Thirty-five former workers who were not currently engaged in a Return to Work (RTW) program participated in this study. The Malaysian language questionnaires administered were the Occupational Self Assessment Version 2.2 (OSAv2.2) and Health surveillance version 2 (SF-36v2). Descriptive and inference analyses were used for data analysis.

Mean occupational competence in the sample was found to be lower but there were no differences in our results based on gender, job status, or whether the person was still receiving medical treatment. The items of occupational functioning that they have some difficulty to do were; physically doing what they need to do [n=15, 43%], taking care of the place where they live [n=14, 40%], getting where they need to go [n=14, 40%], doing activities they like [n=17, 49%] and effectively using their abilities [n=15, 42%]. Significant associations were found with most activity limitations measured by the SF-36v2, with the strongest of these occurring with the item "bending, kneeling or stooping" ( $\rho=0.64$ ), "vigorous activities such as running" ( $\rho=0.57$ ) and "lifting or carrying groceries" ( $\rho=0.53$ ). All participants rated the impact of their health problems on social activities as moderate to extreme.

These findings provide tentative evidence that reduced occupational functioning and activity limitation in participants may represent a potential barrier to participating in the current RTW program. However, further studies such as clinical trial are warranted to support the needs of occupational therapy approach.

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