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Prevalence of tinnitus with correlation to the usage of protective hearing equipment among airport workers

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Introduction & Aim: Epidemiological studies have shown that tinnitus and occupational hearing loss are common symptoms in the working population. Only few studies have assessed the aforementioned symptoms in this population, none of which have assessed airport field workers, thus the need for our study.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among airport field workers at King Khaled International Airport in Riyadh. The sample size was calculated to be 380. Each was asked to fill a self-administered questionnaire and undergo pure tone audiometry to assess hearing level. The questionnaire assessed the participants' demographics, usage of protective hearing equipment (PHE) as well as prevalence and characteristics of tinnitus if present.

Results: Of all field workers, 300 (78%) have agreed to participate in the study. A number of 180 (60%) participants believe that PHE prevents noise-related hearing loss. Of all participants, 114 (38%) of workers use PHE. No association was found between the participants' believe regarding PHE benefits and their usage of the equipment ($P=0.473$). Tinnitus was reported by 81 (27%) of the whole sample. Most of the participants 171 (57%) were found to have hearing impairment (>25 dB HL) at low frequencies (0.5, 1.2 kHz), in comparison to 144 (48%) at high frequencies (4 and 8 kHz).

Conclusion: Even with relatively good knowledge about the importance of PHE, only few workers actually use them. Thus, frequent audiometric screening tests as well as enforcement of PHE usage by airport field workers needs to be introduced by the airport administrations.

Biography

Ibrahim Alnajashi is currently a Medical student of Ear, Nose and Throat Department at King Saud University, KSA.

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