

Pain in the Workplace

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Summary

Chronic pain is a major public health problem that generates disability and significant costs in health services and productivity of countries. It is particularly pain and chronic pain, one of the most frequent causes of incapacity, and studies show that there is a burden on both economic and social work. In addition, general pain, especially muscle-skeletal, is considered today as a public health epidemic proportions, by the number of people affected and the changes it generates in individuals who suffer. 20% of musculoskeletal pain will become a chronic type and generates a great impact on health services, causing incapacity which affects the productivity of countries.

Currently, the prevalence of chronic pain, their characteristics and costs have been extensively studied, it is necessary to know the impact of chronic pain at work, and workers as well as work causes painful conditions. Some studies have addressed this issue and points can comment that pain is the most common disabling condition in American workers [1]. And that 30% of the US workforce has experienced a loss of productive time two weeks for pain conditions. Only 19.5 days migraine reported work loss [2]. Chronic pain in American workers produced a loss of 13% productivity (lost productive time) being the most pain conditions that cause this loss: back pain (3.2%), arthritis (2%) pain, and muscle-skeletal pain (2%). Workers reported that the lost production hours for pain conditions were 4.6 hours compared with causes due to other health conditions [1].

Pain produces a high percentage of people lose their jobs, leave their studies or work to be changed, being worldwide a major cause of absenteeism. The economic impact of persistent and chronic pain represents a substantial burden on patients, their families, employers, economies and societies in general [3]. It is recognized that the impact of persistent pain is greater than the other health conditions, because of its effects on rates of absenteeism, reduced productivity levels and

increased risk of leaving the labor market and the cost for the health system and resource allocation [4].

Despite the importance of pain in workers their impact on society are few studies that address this issue and are even more scarce in Latin America and these address the issue in relation to the areas of pain and from the point of view of the ergonomics. A doctoral thesis on this subject in Chile conducted on a group of pensioners and workers compensation for illness or accident in a period of two years shows that the prevalence of chronic pain 43.8% [5]. These data presented show the importance of addressing pain at work from a different perspective and approach it as the problem of occupational and public health by creating specific programs for this problem, such as chronic pain are addressed for years, but still continues to serve from the point of view of ergonomics and occupational health, I personally believe that there is a debt to the pain of workers being treated in units specialized and multidisciplinary pain, especially by doctors and therapists pain specialists directed, which is not seen in this area in my country.

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