

Self-reported Musculoskeletal Pain among a selected sample of dentists in South Africa: A 12-month Prevalence study

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Introduction: Musculoskeletal trouble (ache, pain, discomfort) originating in the neck, shoulder, and back is a common occupational hazard among dental professionals worldwide. The significance of this problem justified research into the prevalence of these symptoms among dentists in South Africa for which there is currently no information.

Aims: The aim of this study was to investigate the one-year prevalence of self-reported musculoskeletal trouble in the neck, shoulder, and lower back areas among dentists in South Africa.

Methods: A survey questionnaire was forwarded to all members of the South African Dental Association whose email addresses were recorded on the Association data base. The email survey was performed using the previously validated Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaires.

Results: This cross sectional study revealed a self-reported 12-month prevalence of musculoskeletal trouble (ache, pain, discomfort) among dentists in South Africa of 77,9% involving the neck, 69,8% the lower back, and 72,4% the shoulders. Multiple regression analysis showed that a decrease in height among the respondents was associated with an increase in neck trouble (0.962 [CI 0.938; 0.992]).

Conclusions: The 12-month prevalence's for musculoskeletal trouble (ache, pain, discomfort) among dentists in South Africa is high and has a considerable effect on both work and leisure activities.

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