



Low back pain, intervertebral disc and occupational diseases

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Nonspecific low back pain and sciatica are prevalent diseases among working adults and have become a worrying occupational health issue because they sometimes affect continuation or resumption of employment. Epidemiological studies that based questionnaires on workers' healthcare consumption have shown a higher prevalence of these disorders in certain industrial sectors. Thus, low back disorders are usually more prevalent among workers exposed to cumulative lumbar load such as manual handling, awkward postures of the trunk and whole-body vibrations. In addition, morphological and biomechanical studies have compared disc space narrowing and the intensity of lumbar workload. Although debated, the relationship between disc degeneration and biomechanical work exposures seems to be usually accepted by most authors. In response to a considerable need of prevention and compensation for workers, low back pain and/or disc disease can be recognized as an occupational diseases in several countries but the criteria of recognition remains heterogeneous from one country to another.

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