Heavy manual work, exposure to vibration and Dupuytren's disease? Results of a surveillance program for musculoskeletal disorders

Submitted by Emmanuel Lemoine on Wed, 11/12/2014 - 16:24

Titre
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Type de publication
Article de revue

Auteur
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Editeur
BMJ Publishing Group

Type
Article scientifique dans une revue à comité de lecture

Année
2012

Langue
Anglais

Date
2012/04

Numéro
4

Pagination
296 - 9

Volume
69

Titre de la revue
Occupational and Environmental Medicine

ISSN
1470-7926

Mots-clés
Adult [11], Cross-Sectional Studies [12], Dupuytren Contracture [13], France [14], Humans [15], Logistic Models [16], Male [17], Middle Aged [18], occupational diseases [19], Occupational exposure [20], Occupations [21], Population Surveillance [22], Prevalence [23], Questionnaires [24], Risk Factors [25], vibration [26], work [27]
INTRODUCTION: This study aimed to determine the prevalence of Dupuytren's disease in men and its relationship with work exposure, particularly heavy manual work with and without significant use of vibrating tools, using data from a surveillance program for musculoskeletal disorders. METHOD: This cross-sectional study was conducted in France between 2002 and 2005. Dupuytren's disease was diagnosed clinically by one of 83 occupational physicians. Exposure in relation to work status and occupational risk factors was assessed with a self-administered questionnaire, and categorised according to vibration exposure (defined as use of vibrating tools for ≥2 h/day), heavy manual work without vibration exposure (defined as use of hand tools for ≥2 h/day (use of vibrating tools for ≥2 h/day excluded) and Borg scale ≥15/20) and no such exposure. Bivariate and multivariate associations using logistic models were recorded in men and in those with >10 years in the same job. RESULTS: Of 2161 men, 1.3% (n=27) had Dupuytren's disease (mean age 47.1±6.7 years). Heavy manual work without vibration exposure was significantly associated with the condition (adjusted OR (aOR) 3.9; 95% CI 1.3 to 11.5) adjusted on age and diabetes), as was use of vibrating tools (aOR 5.1; 2.1 to 12.2). These associations remained significant among subjects with >10 years in the same job, with increases in aOR of 6.1 (1.5 to 25.0) and 10.7 (3.4 to 34.6), respectively. CONCLUSION: Despite the limited number of cases, occupational exposure, including both vibration exposure and heavy manual work without significant vibration exposure, was associated with Dupuytren's disease.
[29] http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/oemed-2011-100319

Publié sur Okina (http://okina.univ-angers.fr)