# PREVALANCE OF LOW BACKACHE AMONG HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

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**Abstract:**
*Healthcare profession is concerned with maintaining and promoting the health of the patients. Because of their work environment and workload healthcare professionals are at the very high risk of many occupational health problems.*
*Material and Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study design was used. One hundred and twenty health professionals were included and information was collected on socio-demographic characteristics, job history, frequency, severity and pattern of low back pain. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0*
*Results: The ages of respondents were between 18-58 years with the mean of 31.24 ± 8.89 years. The life time prevalence of Low Back Pain among workers shows that out of 100 respondents 60 (60%) workers suffered from Low Back Pain in their lifetime while 40 (40%) didn't. 12 months prevalence of Low Back Pain was calculated.*
*Conclusion: About 60% of the professionals were suffering from low back pain which indicates high prevalence and is in line with prevalence of low back pain in the developed countries.*
*Keywords: Low Back Pain, Healthcare Professionals, Frequency, Risk factors, Pakistan.*

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## INTRODUCTION:

Low Back pain is the pain in area of the Back between the ribcage and the gluteal folds (Lumbar Spine) whether or not it extends into the legs (Sciatica). Low back pain is one of most common musculoskeletal disorders in the world and one of the most common causes of visits to the physicians in the developed countries. It is estimated that about 84% of population in the world suffers from low back Pain at least once in the life time with 23 % proceeding towards chronic low back pain and about 11-12% are disabled because of low back pain [1]. Low back pain has been shown to be a major health problem in the females and mostly affecting the individuals with 40 to 80 years of age [2]. Among the working individuals low back pain has been found to be one of the most common causes of less efficiency at work, absence from the job, changing the job, and early retirement from job (who retire because of sickness) [3].

Healthcare workers are most affected by the musculoskeletal disorders because of their work load i.e. standing for longer durations, frequent bending, lifting the patients etc. Among this professional group it has been found that low back Pain comprises about 44% of all the musculoskeletal disorders preceding disorders of neck (28%) and knee joint (22%) in the nurses [4].

This topic was selected as researchers were unable to find reasonable amount of literature conducted on the frequency or prevalence of the low back pain among Pakistani healthcare providers. So the main objective of this study is to get an idea about the prevalence of low back pain in Pakistani healthcare workers.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS:

Professionals with ages from 18-60 years with at least 1 year of work experience were included from Lahore General Hospital. In addition, pregnant workers and those with serious pathological diseases were also excluded from the study. Data was recorded on a predefined Proforma. Data was entered and analyzed using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 23.0. The categorical values were expressed in the form of frequency and proportion. Chi-square test and p-value were used to find out the relationship of Low Back Pain with Age, Body Mass Index, Marital Status and work experience in years. P-value of less than 0.05 were considered significant statistically.

## RESULTS:

A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed and out of those 100 professionals answered and returned the questionnaires. The ages of respondents were between 18-58 years with the mean of $31.24 \pm 8.89$ years. Body mass index of respondents was between 17.91-32.12 kg/m2 with mean of $25.53 \pm 3.78$ kg/m2. Working experience of respondents were between 1-36 years with Mean and SD of $11.64 \pm 9.17$ while the working hours per day were between 6-12 hours/day with Mean and SD of $7.34 \pm 2.02$ hours. The life time prevalence of Low Back Pain among workers shows that out of 100 respondents 60 (60%) workers suffered from Low Back Pain in their lifetime while 40 (40%) didn't. 12 months prevalence of Low Back Pain was calculated and it was found that 32 professionals (32%) who have experienced Low Back Pain in their life have also suffered from Low Back Pain in the last 12 months with 44%, 14% and 6% professionals have suffered from Low Back Pain for 1-7 days, 8-30 days, >30 days.

## DISCUSSION:

Life time prevalence of low back pain among healthcare workers working in different hospitals was found to be 60% which is very high and is comparable to findings in other previously conducted studies which found the life time prevalence of low back pain among female workers to be 74.5% [5] , 73% [6] and 78% [7] . Seven days prevalence of low back pain was found to be 44% that is higher than the finding in another previously conducted study that showed point prevalence to be 36.2% [5].

Low back pain is one the major causes of work hours losses and absence from the job in the whole world. Of all those nurses who suffered from low back pain 51.85% had to reduce their activity at job while 40.74% remained absent from the job for at least 1 day in the last one year. According to the findings in another study conducted in Ireland it had been found that among the working individuals low back pain is one of the most common causes of absence from the job, changing the job, less efficiency at work and early retirement from job (who retire because of sickness) [3] . Also, it has been found that the nurses lose approximately 0.75 million working days on an average because of back pain [8].

## CONCLUSION:

It is concluded that frequency of low back pain among healthcare professionals is high. Frequency of low back pain was found to be high in married workers, in middle aged and overweight and obese workers. To prevent incidence of low back pain it is essential to maintain proper and good body posture during work, also the reduction of weight and avoidance of heavy weight lifting are equally important.

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