

PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO SOLVING UPPER LIMB DISORDERS AT NATIONAL BROADCASTING ORGANISATION

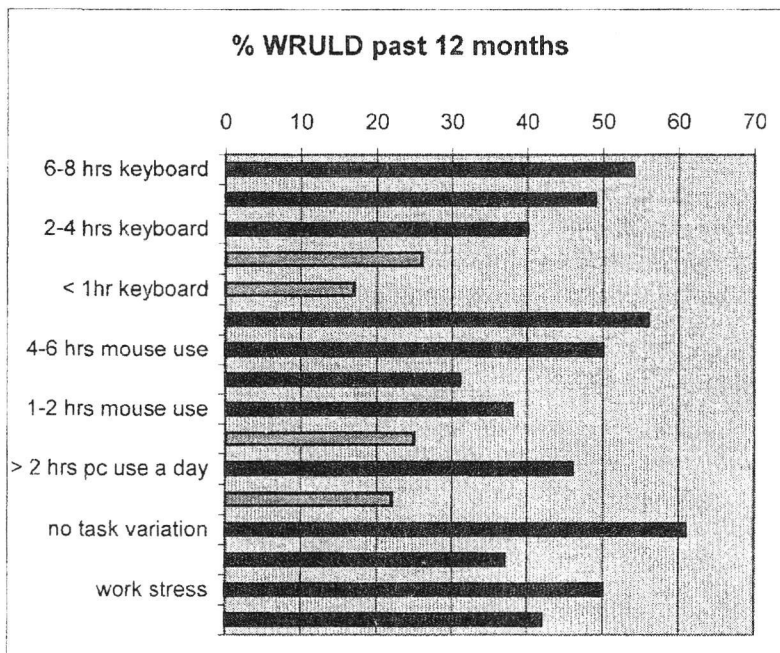
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Aim of the study: The national Dutch broadcasting organisation, wished to find out to what extent their employees were suffering from work related neck and upper limb disorders (WRULD), what solutions are available and possible in their organisation and if the organisation is ready to commit to changing behaviour and culture to accommodate a healthy working environment.

Methods: With a walk-through survey and interviews all relevant aspects of the workplace, furniture, work organisation and tasks in the organisation were identified. With this information an organisation-specific survey was sent to all 900 employees. Based on the results of the questionnaire the departments with high scores on WRULD were invited to participate in several participatory workshops. One focussed on problem identification, and one on 'problem solving'. In these protocollised workshops the employees were asked to identify and prioritise what risk factors in their work contribute to developing WRULD and how they would solve these problems. Both physical and organisational factors were tackled. The experts from TNO also had a 'problem solving' workshop based on the information gathered in the organisation.

Results: 89% of the respondents had suffered neck and arm complaints in the last year, unfortunately only 51% of employees responded. 44% suffered from serious and/or long-lasting WRULD. Both physical and psychosocial risk factors were reported (see below). Some employees suffer high job demands and high work loads. High job autonomy partly counteracts these stressors.

Conclusions: WRULD are caused by poor workstations, insufficient employee knowledge on prevention of complaints and work stress. New furniture and better use of existing furniture is part of the solution, as is training and education of employees and managers. To combat workstress a reshuffling of tasks and responsibilities is one of the solutions.



References

Miedema MC, KH The, NM Wiezer, R van der Berg. Integrale aanpak RSI bij NOS. TNO Arbeid rapport 4020184/R2004289. Januari 2001a.