

Studies, Articles, Abstracts, Testimonials:

Repetitive Stress Symptoms in Radiology: Prevalence and Response to Ergonomic Interventions

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Purpose

To determine the prevalence of repetitive stress symptoms among radiologists working in a archiving and communication systems (PACS) environment and to assess their responses to ergonomic interventions.

Methods

A survey instrument was designed in conjunction with occupational health specialists and administered to 107 faculty members, fellows, and residents working in a PACS-based radiology department. Data gathered included the number of hours per day working at a personal computer or PACS monitor, the presence of repetitive stress symptoms, and prior diagnosis of repetitive stress syndrome. Additionally, respondents who had received ergonomic chairs, ergonomic workstations, or ergonomic training were asked to rank the impact of these interventions on the severity of repetitive stress symptoms using a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from -3 ("markedly worse") to 3 ("markedly better").

Results

A total of 73 responses were received (a 68% response rate) from 33 faculty members and 40 trainees (residents and fellows). A majority of respondents (68%) reported working more than 8 hours per day at a personal computer or PACS monitor (55% of faculty members, 80% of trainees). Repetitive stress symptoms were reported by 58% of respondents (52% of faculty members, 63% of trainees), and prior diagnoses of repetitive stress syndrome were reported by 38% (39% of faculty members, 38% of trainees). Improvements in repetitive stress symptoms (scale ratings of 1 to 3) were reported by 70% of respondents who received ergonomic chairs (n = 54), 80% who received ergonomic workstations (n = 55), and 80% who underwent ergonomic training (n = 20).

Conclusion

Repetitive stress symptoms are highly prevalent among radiologists working in a PACS-based environment but are responsive to ergonomic interventions. Radiology departments should implement ergonomic initiatives to reduce the risk for repetitive stress injuries.