Abstract:
Work conditions and prevalence of musculoskeletal pain among para-rubber planters: a case study in Tambon Nakleu, Kantang District, Trang Province
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Objective: To describe work conditions and work practices and to compare the prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders between high and low workload periods among para-rubber planters in Tambon Nakeun, Kantang District, Trang Province.
Design: A cross-sectional study

Material and methods: One hundred and eighty five para–rubber planters at low workload periods and 154 planters at high workload periods were included. In–depth interviews and observations based upon the job safety analysis method were performed on 10 subjects.

Result: Low back pain had the highest prevalence of 55.8% at high workload periods and 55.1% at low workload periods; hand and wrist pain of 39.9% at high workload periods and 23.8% at low workload periods; and leg pain of 13.6% at high workload periods and 10.3% at low workload periods. Prevalence of hand, wrist and elbow pain were significantly increased at high workload periods (22.4% at high workload periods and 14.9% at low workload periods). The severity of pain showed no difference between the two periods, whereas the frequency of shoulder, elbow, hand and wrist pain increased at high workload periods.

Conclusions: Para–rubber planters are at risk of musculoskeletal disorders due to inappropriate working conditions such as confined and unhygienic working areas, repeated overstrain or overextension posture at work; inappropriate design of working tools; ground–level working areas and night work. Most of the planters were poor, in debt, and felt dissatisfied with their work.

Key words: musculoskeletal pain or disorders, para–rubber planters