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## PP 23 - Work-Related Factors for Low Back Pain among Intensive Care Nurses

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**Background:** Low back pain is a common musculoskeletal disorder affecting many nurses in Sri Lanka, especially Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurses. This has many negative consequences both on the nurse and the patient. Low back pain reduces work efficiency and work life satisfaction of nurses and sometimes leads to early retirement or even to high turnover.

**Objectives:** To determine the prevalence and work-related factors of low back pain among ICU nurses.

**Methodology:** Three hundred twenty nurses (93.3% females and 6.7% males) aged between 21-40 years with more than one year working experience in ICUs in the National Hospital of Sri Lanka and De Soyza Hospital for Women were purposively recruited for this quantitative descriptive study. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires and descriptive technique was performed for data analysis.

**Results and conclusions:** Prevalence of low back pain was 53.4% among the participants. Duration of having low back pain for more than one year which originated following duties was 54.6%. Only 9% of them were having back pain before they assumed duties in ICUs. Majority of participants (64.7%) had to complete assigned tasks within a very limited time. Lifting patient (37%), transferring a patient from bed to chair (11.8%), and positioning a patient without any help (9.2%) were found to be the initiating factors of low back pain. Working in insufficient work space (52.1%) and working more than 40 hours per week (79.8%) were also identified. 37.8% participants were working under above conditions for more than five years in ICU. Strenuous duty schedule, incorrect working positions used for lifting and positioning of patients, seem to be associated with low back pain among ICU nurses. Furthermore, nurses are often exposed to poor work postures due to the uncomfortable working condition and inappropriate materials. Other factors that might cause low back pain should be further studied.

**Keywords:** Factors, Intensive Care Unit, low back pain, nurses, prevalence

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