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*Musculoskeletal disorders in the  
fisheries sector*

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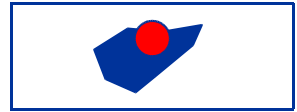
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- EU Focal Points
- CC Focal Points
- EEA EFTA Focal Points



# Contents

- What are musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)?
- Who is at risk?
- What are the risk factors?
- What is the cost?
- MSDs, A European Priority
- Workplace prevention
- A higher profile in 2007

# What are musculoskeletal disorders?

Work related MSDs are a broad range of health problems including:

- Back disorders - typically linked to manual handling work and awkward postures
- Upper limb disorders (WRULDS or “RSI”) - linked to poor postures, repetitive movements, vibrations, and other risk factors (e.g. the cold)

# Who is at risk?

- Everyone!, but especially manual workers
- Older workers report more problems, but may be due to longer exposure or work tasks designed for younger workers
- No clear gender division, differences in reporting tends to be due to different job types for men and women

# Risk factors (1)

- In the physical work environment
  - Heavy loads
  - Poor posture
  - Repetitive movements
  - Forceful hand applications
  - Direct mechanical pressure on body tissues,
  - Body vibrations
  - Cold work environments

# Risk factors (2)

- Organisational factors
  - Pace of work,
  - Repetitive work
  - Time patterns (e.g. not being able to choose break times)
  - Payment systems
  - Monotonous work
  - Fatigue
  - Poor psychosocial work environment (e.g. bad relations at work)

# What is the cost? (1)

- Fishing identified by several MS as being the sector with the highest incidence of MSDs (e.g Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands)
- 2000 workers per 100,00 in fisheries sector reported MSDs caused or made worse by work
- MSDs are the most reported work-related health complaint in Europe
- 1 in 3 of all EU15 workers consider that their work affects their health in the form of backache.



## What is the cost? (2)

- High cost to employers - lost production , staff sickness, compensation and insurance costs, loss of experienced staff, reduced quality of work
- High cost to workers - A ruined, painful life
- High costs to Member States
  - All work related ill-health is estimated to cost between 2.6 and 3.8% of GNP
  - Estimated cost for MSDs is between 0.5% and 2% of GNP

# MSDs, A European Priority

- Lisbon agenda identifies good occupational safety and health as necessary for a competitive economy
- The Community Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health identifies MSDs as a priority
- Fishing identified as a high risk industry in the strategy
- There is a Directive structure – e.g. framework directive, manual handling directive, fishing vessels

# Workplace prevention

## Key aspects of workplace prevention

- Risk assessment
- Health surveillance
- Training
- Worker information and consultation
- Ergonomic work systems
- Prevention of fatigue

# Risk assessment

- Employers are required to evaluate risks and take action to protect workers in a process called risk assessment
  - Look for the hazards (things that may cause harm)
  - Decide who may be harmed and how. Evaluate the risks and options for solving the problems, and decide on action
  - Take action
  - Review the findings

# Factors that may increase risk of MSDs in vessels

- Long hours leading to fatigue,
- Old and inadequately maintained vessels,
- Cramped workplaces,
- Inherent hazards (e.g. cold weather),
- Lack of training,
- Lack of monitoring of safety performance,
- Hazardous product (the catch),
- Lack of hazard identification,
- Failure to use available preventive measures

# A higher profile in 2007

- European Week 2007 is on MSDs
- Following up a campaign in 2000
- EU 25 campaign
- Seeking involvement of all Member States and stakeholders within
- Information (in all EU official languages) and campaign materials provided.
- Campaign to launch June 2007, activities focused in October 2007

# Getting information

- **[HTTP://OSHA.EUROPA.EU](http://osha.europa.eu)**
- All Agency material is free and can be downloaded
- As much is translated as possible – factsheets into all EU official languages
- Site contains both original material and links to key material from Member States and beyond.
- Site is multi-lingual and user can set up a profile (e.g. by language)



*Thank you for your attention !*

<http://osha.europa.eu>