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Prevalence and factors associated with neck, shoulder and low back pains among medical students at University Hospitals

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Aim: The aim of this study is to determine the prevalence of neck, shoulder and low back pain, and factors associated with MSP among medical students at University Hospitals in central Saudi Arabia.

Method: This cross-sectional study conducted among 469 medical students enrolled at a government institution in Central Saudi Arabia, using an online self-administered questionnaire in the English language adapted from the Standardized Nordic Questionnaire.

Results: Four hundred and sixty-nine students responded to our survey. Mean age was 21.4 ± 1.3 years. Majority were females (60.6%), all were Saudis. The prevalence of MSP (at least in one body site) was 85.3% at any time. The prevalence of MSP in the past week was 54.4% and 81.9% in the previous year. The prevalence of neck pain was 24.1% in the past week

and 56.5% in the previous year. The prevalence of back pain was 40.5% in the past week and 67.0% in the previous year. The prevalence of shoulder pain was 25.6% in the past week and 45.6% in the previous year. More than half (58.6%) of the participants experienced depressive symptoms. A higher prevalence of MSP among students in the clinical years was found. MSP was correlated to a positive history of trauma but not to BMI, age, gender, frequency of exercise, caffeine and smoking.

Conclusion: MSP among Saudi medical students is high particularly among medical students in the clinical years. Students who suffer from MSP are prone to develop depressive symptoms and experience a low quality of medical students' life.

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