

**Prevalence of Musculoskeletal Disorders among School  
Teachers in the Thulamela Municipality of Limpopo Province,  
South Africa.**

By

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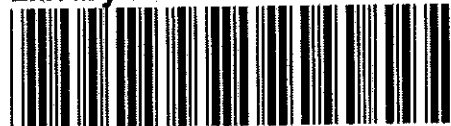
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## Abstract

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are a broad umbrella term to include a wide variety of disorders involving the joints and the soft tissues involved in moving those joints. Exposure to various risk factors present in the workplace may either contribute to the development of MSDs or aggravate a pre-existing condition. School teachers are among the group which appears to suffer from MSDs due to the nature of their job, which involves long- hours of standing, repetitive twisting and turning while teaching. The purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders among school teachers in the Thulamela municipality ward 25. The focus was more on factors associated with musculoskeletal disorders, symptoms, the effects and management of musculoskeletal disorders. The study was carried out using a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional design. The study was conducted in 10 schools from ward 25 Thulamela local municipality; there were 8 primary schools and 2 secondary schools. The targeted population was all school teachers working in primary and secondary schools located in ward 25 Thulamela municipality. The questionnaire was completed by 191 school teachers teaching in both primary and secondary schools in ward 25 Tshinane Circuit. The 68% of teachers who completed the questionnaire were female and 32% of teachers were males. The total sampling method was used due to the small number of teachers. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and ethical aspects were taken into consideration. Data was analysed descriptively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 21.0 version. It was presented using graphs, tables and pie chart. The results showed that 63% of the teachers had musculoskeletal disorders; both individual and work related factors were found to be the risk factors of MSDs. The study showed that 65% of teachers who reported MSDs fall between the age of 41-55 years, and 56% of the teachers with MSDs have working experience of more than 16 years. The finding of the study also showed that 55% of teachers who do not exercise complained of MSDs. It was revealed that about 58% of teachers who complained of MSDs teach more than 300 students on a daily basis, and 63% of teachers who spent more than 7 hours in one position when teaching also reported MSDs. The common types of MSDs reported were shoulder pain (45%), back pain (33%), knee pain (8%), neck pain (12%) and hip pain (2%). The findings of the study call for Interventions based on prevention and control of the occurrence of MSDs in teachers

**Keywords:** Musculoskeletal disorders, Prevalence, and Teachers