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Prevalence and Correlated Factors of Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain among Farmers in Nuwaraeliya Divisional Secretariat, Sri Lanka

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Background: Farmers perform most strenuous task and are exposed to a wide variety of occupational risk and hazards. Musculoskeletal pain is recognized as a significant hazard of agricultural occupation. Musculoskeletal pain of the lower back and lower extremities are commonly affected by chronicity and disability.

Objective: To determine the prevalence and correlated factors of chronic musculoskeletal pain among farmers

Methods: A community-based descriptive study was conducted in 2019 using a convenient sample of 369 farmers living in Nuwaraeliya Divisional Secretariat. A pre-tested, interviewer administered questionnaire including factors related to chronic musculoskeletal pain was used in the study. Data were analysed with descriptive statistics and chi-square test using SPSS version 25.

Results: Majority of farmers were in 50-59 years age group (n = 133, 36%) and were males (n = 260, 70.5%). The prevalence of musculoskeletal pain among farmers was 69.9% (n = 258). Frequently experienced sites of pain were low back (n = 130, 50.4%), hip (n = 127, 49.2%) and knee (n = 106, 41.1%). Farmers who were in 50-59 years age group, working in 16 to 25 years, working for more than 8 hours a day and working for 7 days per week had significantly high prevalence of chronic musculoskeletal pain. Chronic musculoskeletal pain was significantly associated with age (p <0.001), gender (p = 0.001), working years (p <0.001), working days for a week (p = 0.012) and working hours in a day (p <0.001).

Conclusions: Prevelence of chronic musculoskeletal pain was high among farmers. The study found that the working years, working hours, working days in a week associated to certain categories of chronic musculoskeletal pain. Findings will be useful for guiding programmes of prevention and management of chronic musculoskeletal pain.

Keywords: Chronic musculoskeletal pain, Correlated factors, Farmers, Prevalence