EFORT2013 Poster Submission

Spine (incl. trauma)
EFORT13-3290
Low back pain amongst the Greek general population. An analysis according to physical and sociodemographic characteristics

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INTRODUCTION: Despite the high incidence of low back pain (LBP) internationally, there is a scarcity of prevalence studies across the general population within Greece.
OBJECTIVES: The aims of the present study were to estimate LBP prevalence in the Greek general population and explore its association with physical and sociodemographic characteristics, which seem to be of importance.
METHODS: A sample of 1667 people of the Greek adult population was randomly selected by stratified sampling from a gross area (encompassing rural and urban representation) within the Greek mainland. A survey form was developed encompassing personal information (education, annual income etc.) and 18 questions on symptom presentation (pain areas, sciatica, frequency, pain intensity etc.), activity limitation and LBP-associated history (recurrence, treatment, other musculoskeletal etc.), which according to the literature have been found to be strongly associated with LBP. The survey was conducted and administered by 8 physiotherapists.
RESULTS: A total of 331 (19,8%) people reported LBP (143 males, mean age: 46,3±15,3). Amongst them 71,3% were suffering from recurrent LBP, 55,6% reported associated leg pain (sciatica), and 65,3% received specialist care and were already under some form of conservative treatment. Their average pain intensity was 5,4±1,9 (VAS score) and 52,9% reported that their LBP was limiting their activities and function. There was a strong association between activity limitation and below knee pain. 40,8% stayed in bed and 32,3% took sick leave. LBP frequency and severity were statistically associated with several sociodemographic factors, such as age, education level, marital status etc. Interestingly, annual income and smoking were not correlated with LBP severity, as previously reported[1,2].
CONCLUSION: Given this study's results, LBP and associated leg pain is a frequent symptom amongst the general Greek population. LBP frequency and severity were associated with several sociodemographic characteristics, however, some differences have been highlighted, which will be further discussed.

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Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

Keywords: epidemiology, low back pain