

Are poor workspace ergonomics causing radiologists pain?

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A lack of attention to workspace ergonomics could be to blame for radiologists' musculoskeletal symptoms, including lower back pain, wrist pain, shoulder pain, neck pain, and headaches, according to a study to be presented at the ARRS 2010 Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA.

"Over the past decade, radiologists' workloads have increased dramatically," said Anand M. Prabhakar, MD, lead author of the study. "As a result, more time is being spent in front of computer workstations. Although there has been a lot of attention paid to computer ergonomics in other industries, as well as for the general public, there has not been a lot of emphasis on exploring how ergonomic issues affect radiologists," said Prabhakar.

"Our ongoing study, performed at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA, included a written questionnaire that was administered to 28 randomly selected radiologists from various divisions of a single radiology department. 96 percent of respondents had 2-3 computer monitors at their workstation and only 7.2 percent were symptom free. The prevalence of various symptoms was: [lower back pain](#) (39.2 percent), wrist pain (7.4 percent), shoulder pain (32.1 percent), neck [pain](#) (42.8 percent), and headache (32.1 percent)," said Prabhakar.

"Work related musculoskeletal symptoms are common in radiologists working in a digital environment. Most radiologists make some effort to alter workstation [ergonomics](#); however, it is usually insufficient," he said.

"Research into workstation design is important to minimize the potential long-term implications of repetitive stress trauma in [radiologists](#)," said Prabhakar.

Provided by American College of Radiology

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