

## Study finds limited resources for injured surgeons

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Nearly half of orthopaedic surgeons sustain at least one injury during their career and, in many cases, the resources available to them are inadequate, according to a Vanderbilt study in *The Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery*.

The study is the first to demonstrate that many surgeons are injured on the job during their careers, according to lead author Manish Sethi, M.D., assistant professor of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation.

Twenty-five percent of orthopaedic surgeons surveyed reported an [injury](#) to the hand, followed by the lower back (19 percent), neck (10 percent) and shoulder (7 percent).

"I expected a fair number of back and hand injuries, but I was surprised that 38 percent of injured respondents reported no institutional resources available to support them as they recovered," Sethi said. "In addition, only about 25 percent of respondents said they had reported their injury to their institution."

Forty-four percent of the surveys indicated that the surgeon had sustained at least one occupational injury in their [career](#) and 10 percent of respondents missed work due to their injuries, the study found.

"Some of these injuries were significant, having an impact on operating room performance and causing the surgeon to lose three or four weeks of work," Sethi said.

"These results would suggest that we need to think about the resources available to [orthopaedic surgeons](#), given that this volume of missed work may have economic implications for both the surgeons and their health care systems."

The electronic survey used in the study captured information such as the respondent's subspecialty, practice setting and length of time in practice, as well as some basic information about the injuries sustained.

Surgeons who had practiced from 11-20 years or from 21-30 years were more likely to be injured than those in practice for 10 years or less.

Implementation of greater institutional support is warranted to aid surgeons recovering from occupational injuries and to reduce costs associated with lost productivity from the surgeon, the authors said.

Provided by Vanderbilt University Medical Center

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