

New-onset sciatica tied to age, obesity, mental workload

January 5 2014



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Ko Matsudaira, M.D., Ph.D., from Kanto Rosai Hospital in Kawasaki, Japan, and colleagues surveyed study participants at baseline and at one- and two-year follow-ups (3,194 completed all) regarding low back pain and sciatica as well as about individual characteristics, ergonomic work demands, and work-related psychosocial factors.

The researchers found that, of the 765 participants reporting no [low back pain](#) in the preceding year and no history of sciatica at baseline, 18.4 percent reported sciatica during the two years of follow-up. Overall,

significant associations were seen between new-onset sciatica and age and obesity. Obesity and [mental workload](#) were significantly associated with new sciatica, after controlling for age and sex. Age and obesity remained statistically significant in multivariate analysis (odds ratio, 1.59 and 1.77, respectively).

"In previously asymptomatic Japanese workers, the risk of developing new-onset sciatica is mediated by individual factors," the authors write. "Our findings suggest that the management of [obesity](#) may prevent new-onset [sciatica](#)."

Relevant financial activities outside the submitted work were disclosed:
grant

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Citation: New-onset sciatica tied to age, obesity, mental workload (2014, January 5) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-01-new-onset-sciatica-tied-age-obesity.html>

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