Study examines gender differences in musculoskeletal disorders

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In a new paper co-authored by Professor Julie Côté, researchers found that differences in gender may explain "susceptibility to developing musculoskeletal disorders when performing repetitive work for prolonged periods in occupational life."

The paper examines research conducted with 113 healthy young adults, and specifically looks at gender differences in susceptibility to musculoskeletal disorders (MSD). Traditionally work-related MSD's have been reported more often by women, with an increase specifically in injuries related to neck and shoulder/arm. The study attempts to reveal the specific mechanisms whereby this occurs, and to reveal whether or not gender differences exist in the ways that men and women respond to performing specific workpace tasks: i.e., that of a cashier, or meat-cutter -where high incidences of workplace-related MSDs occur.

"To the best of our knowledge," write the authors in a point for discussion, "this is the first study to compare motor responses accompanying fatigue between men and women in a standardized repetitive task involving the upper extremities."

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More information: Divya Srinivasan et al. Gender differences in fatigability and muscle activity responses to a short-cycle repetitive task, *European Journal of Applied Physiology* (2016). DOI: 10.1007/s00421-016-3487-7