

MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURY AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

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BACKGROUND

- Research in Canada indicates that healthcare workers have a greater risk of experiencing occupational injuries than any other group. The majority of these injuries are musculoskeletal.
- Musculoskeletal Injuries (MSIs) are injuries that affect muscles, tendons and ligaments, nerves, blood vessels or related soft tissues. These injuries can occur from overexertion, such as when lifting a heavy patient, or from repeatedly using the same muscles, such as when removing pills from blister packs. This type of injury helps to explain why nurses in Canada have more sick time than any other occupation.
- MSIs can be extremely debilitating, often causing anxiety, depression, and stress. Unfortunately, the reported prevalence of MSIs within the Canadian nursing workforce has been as high as 72%.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to gain further understanding of musculoskeletal injuries in the Canadian healthcare workforce. Additionally, perceptions and levels of awareness about musculoskeletal injuries from nursing students were assessed using a survey created by the students involved in this project.

SURVEY

THE FOLLOWING IS A SURVEY THAT WAS CREATED AND DISTRIBUTED TO A COHORT OF UBC NURSING STUDENTS

Please choose either Agree, Somewhat Agree, or Disagree

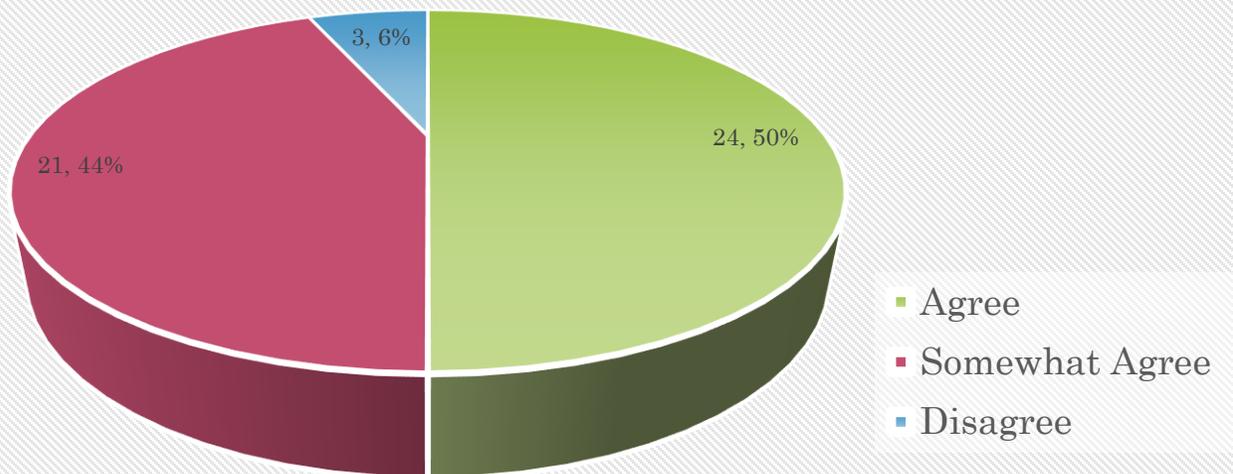
- 1) My nursing program was successful in creating awareness of musculoskeletal injuries
- 2) I have encountered healthcare workers who have suffered from musculoskeletal injuries
- 3) There are visible risk factors for musculoskeletal injuries in my clinical placement area. Risk factors include patient overload, unavailable equipment, frequent lifting and low social support
- 4) I observe good practice for musculoskeletal injury prevention in my clinical practice area
- 5) My clinical workplace fosters a culture of safety
- 6) Information on where and how to report musculoskeletal injuries and near misses is provided in my clinical area

- 7) I have personally experienced a musculoskeletal injury
- 8) Visible information about musculoskeletal injury prevention in the clinical setting would reduce musculoskeletal injury rates
- 9) I am aware that nurses working in the public healthcare system have health and safety benefits such as Registered Massage Therapy, physiotherapy and chiropractic therapy

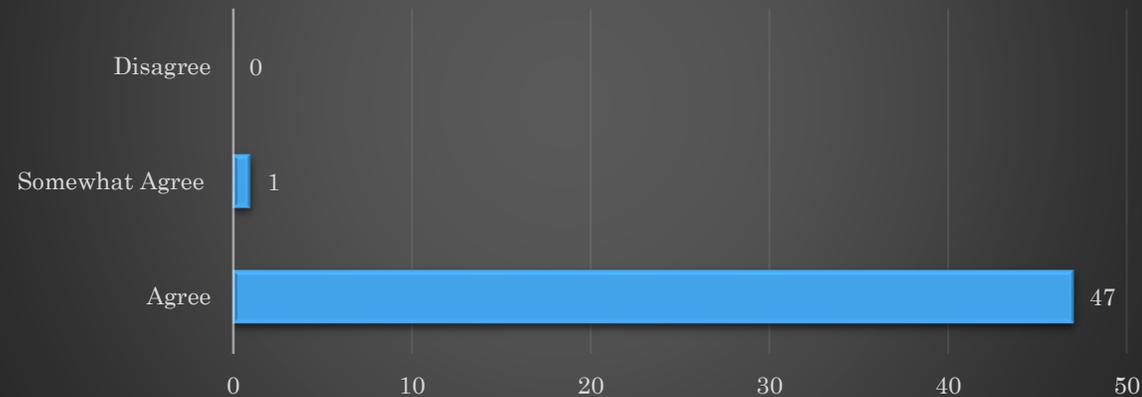
The following questions are open-ended questions

- 1) What would you find useful in regards to the prevention of MSI?
- 2) How do you think you can prevent MSI from occurring ?

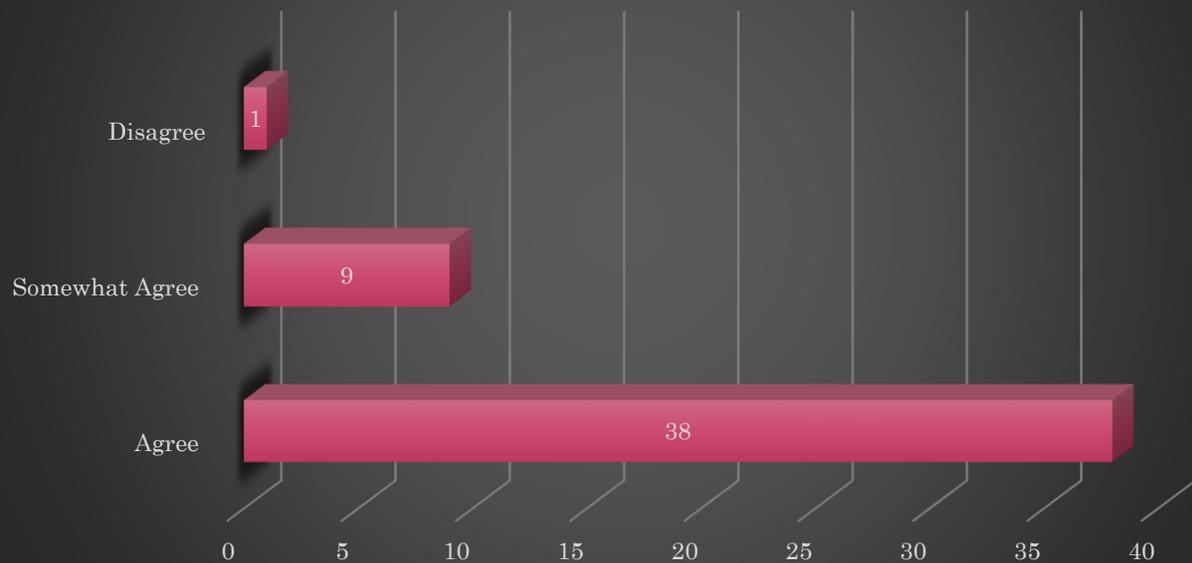
MY NURSING PROGRAM WAS SUCCESSFUL IN CREATING AWARENESS OF MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES



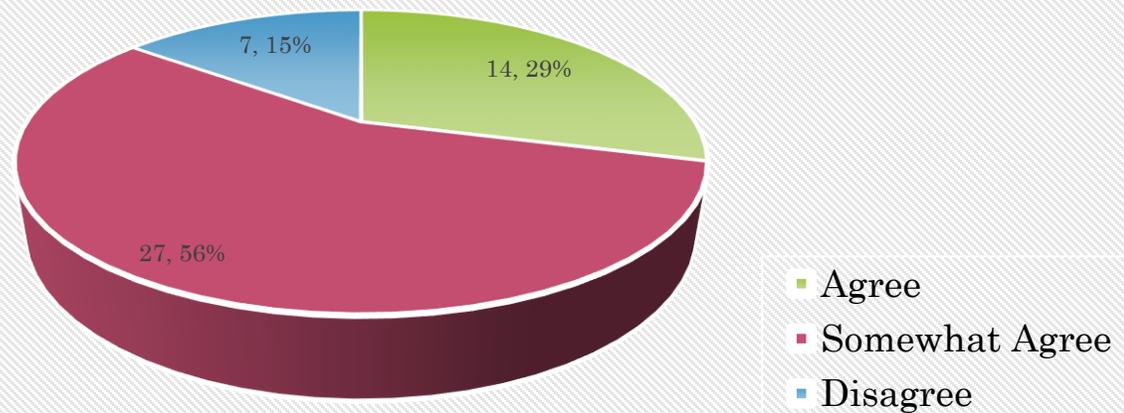
I HAVE ENCOUNTERED HEALTHCARE WORKERS WHO HAVE SUFFERED FROM MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES



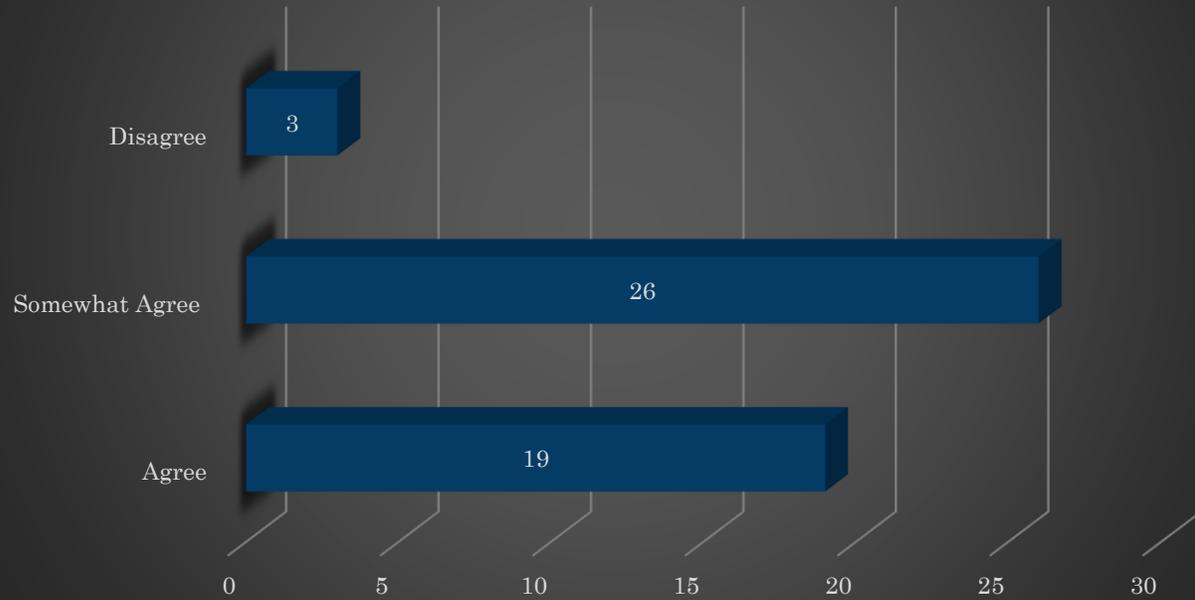
THERE ARE VISIBLE RISK FACTORS FOR MSI IN MY CLINICAL PLACEMENT AREA



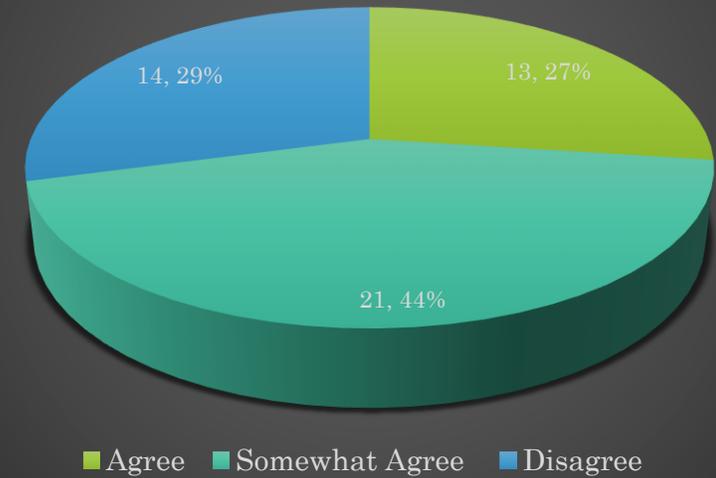
I OBSERVE GOOD PRACTICE FOR MSI PREVENTION IN MY CLINICAL PLACEMENT AREA



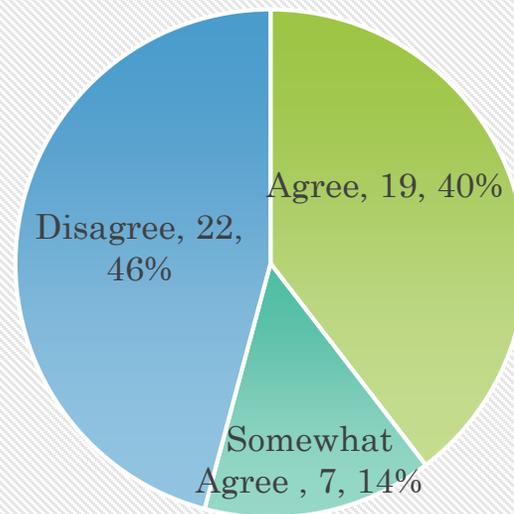
MY CLINICAL WORKPLACE FOSTERS A CULTURE OF SAFETY



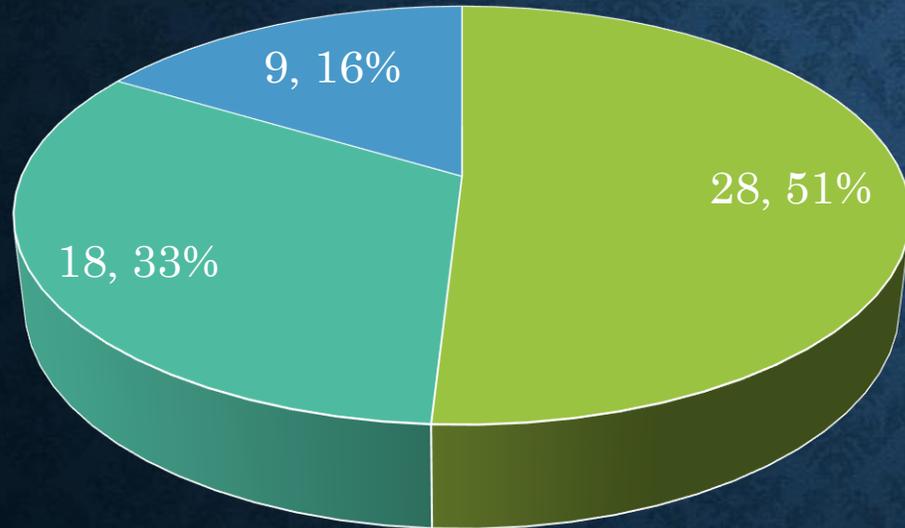
INFORMATION ON WHERE AND HOW TO REPORT MSI AND NEAR MISSES IS PROVIDED IN MY CLINICAL AREA



I HAVE PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED A MSI

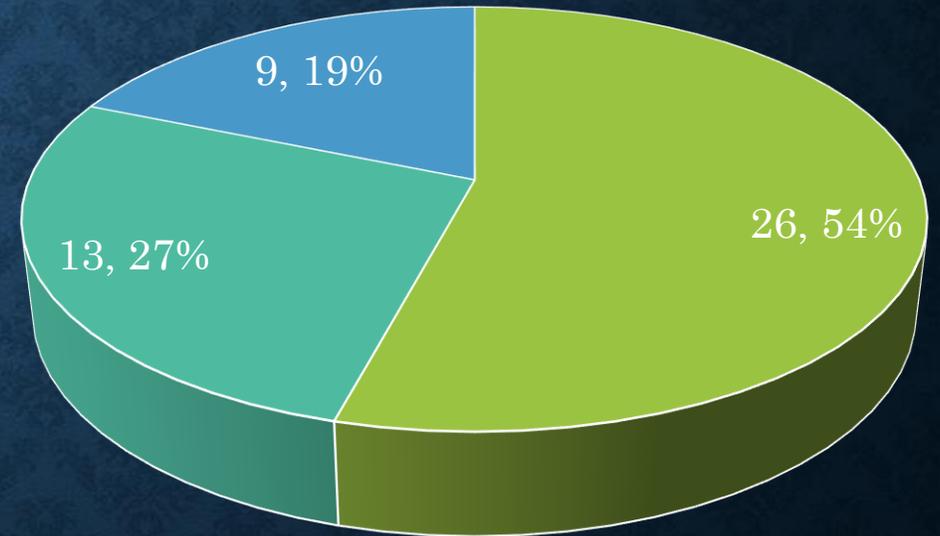


VISIBLE INFORMATION ABOUT MSI PREVENTION IN THE CLINICAL SETTING WOULD REDUCE MSI RATES



■ Agree ■ Somewhat Agree ■ Disagree

I AM AWARE THAT NURSES WORKING IN THE PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SYSTEM HAVE HEALTH AND SAFETY BENEFITS SUCH AS REGISTERED MASSAGE THERAPY, PHYSIOTHERAPY AND CHIROPRACTIC THERAPY



■ Agree ■ Somewhat Agree ■ Disagree

SURVEY RESPONDENTS SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE MSI RATES

- In-service sessions with physical therapist on safe patient transfers
- Self awareness of body mechanics
- Raising the bed during care even if it takes time
- Auditors for the use of good body mechanics similar to hand washing auditors
- Recognizing the signs and symptoms of MSI
- Better nurse and patient ratio
- Working equipment for transferring patients
- Policies and guidelines to support staff on patient transfer and lifting
- Visible reminders by the bedside and at vantage points which illustrate proper body mechanics
- Employer paid benefits to encourage nurses to access physiotherapy and massage therapy

IMPLICATIONS FOR MSI PREVENTION

- Multifactor interventions based on MSI risk assessments are often successful in preventing MSIs
- Interventions using the lifting team approach can be effective
- Reducing MSI rates will result in less staff turnover and less sick days for nurses
- Educators need to frequently remind nurses to prevent and treat MSIs
- Encouraging nurses to report MSIs will help track areas where prevention is needed

FUTURE IDEAS

- State-of-the-art equipment for patient transfers will reduce MSI rates
- Posters throughout the workplace encouraging nurses to be cautious of risks for MSIs will likely reduce injury rates
- Paid MSI prevention workshops will create awareness about ways to prevent MSIs from occurring
- MSI rates may be reduced by having auditors frequently assess hospital units for areas that need further MSI education and prevention

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the results from our survey, we have concluded there is a dire need for education and awareness concerning musculoskeletal injuries in the workplace.

This need was highlighted by the finding that a staggering 100% of our respondents indicated they have encountered a nurse who suffers from MSI, while 50% of those surveyed indicated they were not aware of healthcare benefits for therapies to prevent and treat MSIs.

As nurses are constantly in situations that are high risk for MSI, further education and awareness are necessary in order to decrease MSI rates. To facilitate a move towards MSI prevention, we have created a lanyard card which informs nursing students of the prevalence of musculoskeletal injuries, the importance to seek treatment immediately and the available resources and support they can access. This design is currently being processed by the BCNU.

REFERENCES

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