

Musculoskeletal Pain in Nurses: Rehabilitation vs. Acute Care Settings

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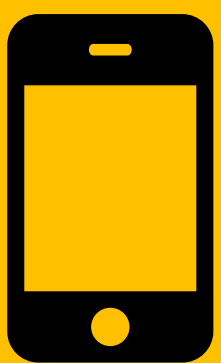
Introduction

- Nursing personnel play a key role in the care of patients.
- This care often involves the physical handling of patients, putting them at risk for work related injury.
- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, registered nurses have a higher-than-average rate of injury and some of the highest rates of injury in the healthcare sector.
- Few studies have assessed the prevalence of pain in rehabilitation nurses. Likewise, the differences in pain rate and/or characteristics in different hospital settings have not yet been reported.

Materials and Methods

- An IRB-approved electronic questionnaire was sent to the nursing staff at a rehabilitation hospital and a tertiary academic acute care hospital.
- Data collected included demographics, nursing credentials, years worked in nursing, time spent on direct patient care tasks, time spent sitting, current or history of musculoskeletal pain while at work, location of pain, treatments sought for pain, and formal ergonomic training received.

Nurses experience disproportionately high rates of MSK pain regardless of work setting.



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Results

- 30 rehabilitation and 31 acute care hospital nurses responded to the survey. 96.7% of rehabilitation nurses and 87.1% of acute care nurses reported current or previous pain while at work (Figure 1).
- Nurses who reported 30+ hours per week of direct patient care tasks were more likely to report pain symptoms than those spending less than 30 hours.
- Nurses who reported standing at work over 50% of the time were more likely to report pain symptoms.
- 36.7% of rehabilitation nurses and 38.7% of acute care nurses experienced a work-related injury.
- 100% of rehabilitation nurses and 90.3% of acute care nurses reported receiving formal ergonomic training.

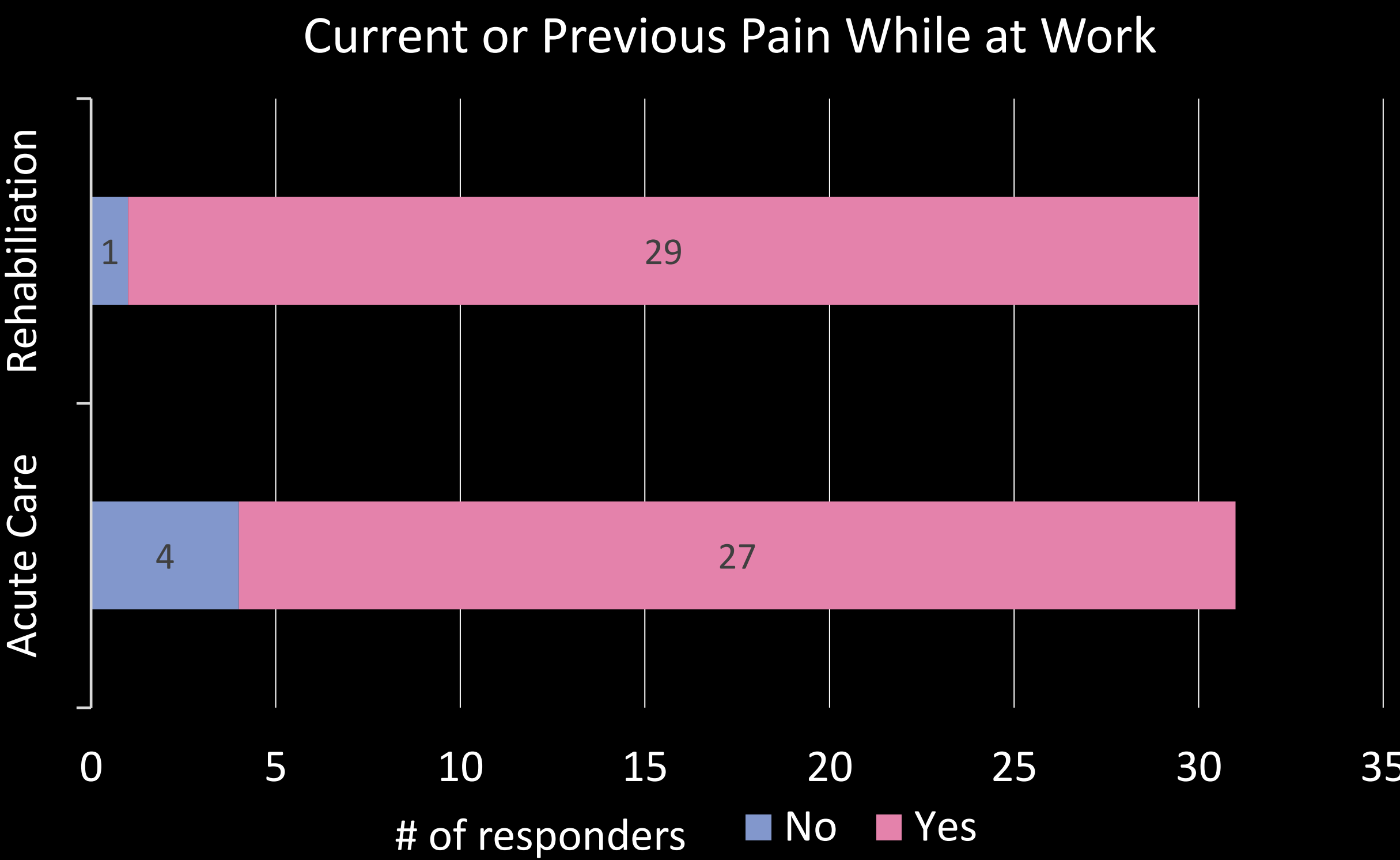


Figure 1

Discussion

- Regardless of setting, there is a high prevalence of musculoskeletal pain in nurses.
- Our findings of pain location and related treatments are consistent with previous studies.
- Pain occurred despite ergonomic training, indicating possible gaps in training which require further investigation. Such understanding is critical for career longevity and work satisfaction.