

A Study on Musculoskeletal Disorders Among Housekeeping Staff in the Hotel Industry

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Abstract: *The housekeeping department is crucial in attracting and retaining guests, as it maintains high-quality decor and service in the hotel. The department is instrumental in determining whether guests are satisfied during their stay. A houseman or housekeeping employee, who holds a hotel service position, is responsible for all behind-the-scenes maintenance to ensure that hotel rooms and facilities are clean and functional. The health of professional cleaners can be affected by various work and environmental factors, and many of these conditions can be managed to prevent the promotion of occupational diseases e.g., musculoskeletal disorders*

Keywords: Hospitality Industry, Housekeeping staff, Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs), Retaining guests, Environmental Factor

I. INTRODUCTION

A hotel's housekeeping department is in charge of maintaining the cleanliness and aesthetic appeal of the guest rooms, common areas, backyards, and surrounding areas. It is also known as the 'backbone of the hotel'. It is said that housekeeping is a 24x7x365 operating department. Hotels hire staff to clean guestrooms, change bed linens, restock supplies, and provide turndown service when requested. Those employed as housekeepers frequently suffer injuries at work that can be costly to employers. This job has repetitive tasks such as bed making, buffing, vacuuming, emptying garbage, tidying, dusting and cleaning floors. The Housekeeping Department in brief definition is accountable for maintaining a clean, orderly, and hygienic environment within various buildings, such as hotels, hospitals, offices, and homes. Its primary duties encompass cleaning rooms, providing laundry services, keeping the area organized and visually appealing, and managing supplies to guarantee a comfortable and safe environment. The Housekeeping Department is crucial in guaranteeing a welcoming and functional space for residents, guests, or employees.

Objective

To examine the sociodemographic traits of housekeepers who suffer from musculoskeletal disorders and to learn about the various body parts that are affected by musculoskeletal illnesses and the risk factors that go along with them. To explore the awareness of Ergonomics amongst the Housekeeping staff.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The secondary data was used in this study. The information is gathered from publications, articles, and research journals.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

(Gawde, 2018) Wrote in the article that workers are disproportionately impacted by musculoskeletal problems, which are the primary cause of illness worldwide because of repetitive tasks and postures. Not much is known about these illnesses among Indian hotel workers.

(Mohd Fahmi, 2021) As stated in an article that using risk assessment, this study attempts to locate and evaluate the possible danger and hazard that results in low back pain when cleaning the hotel room and common areas. In order to identify potential risks and hazards that could result in low back pain while cleaning the hotel room and common areas, this study employed the Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment, and Risk Control (HIRARC) method.

(JAFFAR, 2017) Stated that room attendants' work performance in the hotel industry is affected by ergonomic hazards, which are regarded as a problem or trouble since they lead to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

(Raji & Abidin, 2020) Stated in an article Hotel housekeepers must evaluate the physical risk factors associated with the duties they perform because they are subject to a variety of ergonomic dangers. The purpose of this study is to examine the ergonomic risk and ascertain the prevalence of musculoskeletal symptoms (MSS) among housekeepers employed by low-cost hotels in Sepang, Selangor.

(Cristiane K. Brazil, 2021) Article shows numerous repetitive and taxing chores are part of a housekeeper's profession, which increases their risk of developing musculoskeletal ailments. California introduced a new guideline in 2018 with to prevent place injuries among employees in the hospitality sector.

(Kim, 2009) Article showed the purpose of this study was to evaluate the risk factors for musculoskeletal problems associated with cooking and housekeeping employment in hotels. Data was collected at six hotel settings spread throughout several regions of Korea using the PATH approach, which stands for posture, activity, tools, and handling.

(Kirtigandha Salwe, 2011) Article isto determine the prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders in hospital cleaners

MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDER (MSDs)

A musculoskeletal disorder pertains to the body's bones, tissues, ligaments, tendons, and muscles. Hand and wrist pains, as well as neck and shoulder pain, are common. Injuries associated with housekeepers are generally referred to as musculoskeletal, and bed making duties are particularly taxing on the back due to the need for awkward lifting, twisting, and holding up the mattress while tucking in linens. Housekeeping requires frequent bending, lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling, often in awkward positions throughout the day. Several risk factors contribute to the development of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) among housekeeping staff, including repetitive motions, heavy lifting, awkward postures, and inadequate training in ergonomics and lifting techniques. The physical demands of housekeeping put strain on employees, and prolonged strain will increase the risk of musculoskeletal problem.

Hotel must provide luxurious accommodation and amenities such as high-end furnishing, top-notch services from staff members, it is quite important that high standards are maintained at all-time such as safety, security, cleanliness, hygiene are achieved at all time. The hotel should provide excellent housekeeping services, including daily cleaning and linen services.

Ergonomics refers to adjusting techniques and actions to fit human needs. In housekeeping, it means e.g., designing the housekeeping cart or vacuum cleaner in a user-friendly way for the employee so that using it makes work more effortless. The physical demands of housekeeping put strain on employees, and prolonged strain will increase the risk of musculoskeletal problems. Ergonomics plays a crucial role in preventing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) among housekeeping staff in the hotel industry. Proper ergonomic practices can help reduce the physical strain and discomfort associated with their tasks. Here are some key ergonomic considerations:

1. Give comprehensive ergonomic training to cleaning staff, including guidance on proper lifting ways, posture, and the significance of regular breaks and stretching exercises.
2. Insure housekeeping staff have access to ergonomic tools and outfit, similar as feather light vacuums, malleable wagons, and cleaning trolleys designed to reduce bending and reaching.
3. Set workstations at applicable heights to reduce awkward postures. For illustration, beds should be at a height that allows staff to make them with minimum bending or reaching.
4. Rotate housekeeping tasks to minimize repetitious movements. Staff can switch between vacuuming, bed-timber, and restroom cleaning to avoid dragged, repetitious conditioning.
5. Train workers on safe lifting ways, emphasizing the use of leg muscles and not the reverse when lifting heavy particulars like mattresses or cabinetwork.
6. Insure housekeeping staff have access to sufficient drawing inventories, so they do not need to carry heavy loads from one position to another.
7. To keep drawing inventories and outfit organized and within easy reach, which helps reduce the need for inordinate bending and reaching, insure that drawing inventories and outfit are well-organized and within easy reach.
8. To apply ergonomically designed cleaning tools that reduce the physical strain associated with repetitious cleaning tasks, give ergonomically designed cleaning tools that are easy to use and reduce the physical strain.

9. To encourage housekeeping staff to take short, frequent breaks to rest and stretch, promote regular breaks during work hours to rest and stretch.
10. To establish a reporting system for workers to report discomfort or pain beforehand, produce a reporting system that allows workers to report any physical issues beforehand on.
11. To minimize clutter and obstacles in work areas, design work areas that are free from clutter and obstacles.
12. To continuously estimate ergonomic measures and gather feedback from staff, regularly estimate the effectiveness of the ergonomic measures and gather feedback from staff.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the hotel industry must prioritize ergonomic considerations, ongoing training, and a commitment to creating a work environment that supports the physical health of housekeeping staff to reduce the incidence of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). These MSDs pose a significant occupational health risk due to the physically demanding nature of the work, which includes tasks like lifting heavy objects, bending, reaching, and repetitive motions. Preventive measures, such as ergonomic training, proper tools and equipment, and job rotation, can significantly reduce the risk of MSDs. It is equally important to encourage a culture of safety, regular breaks, and open communication about physical discomfort. Addressing this issue not only enhances the job satisfaction of housekeeping employees but also improves the overall guest experience.

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