

LOW BACK PAIN AND ERGONOMIC RISKS OF TRADITIONAL WEAVING FOR YOUNG WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL SECTORS, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

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Low back pain among adolescents has become a growing public health concern but little known about the burden, particularly in young workers engaged in the informal economy. The aim of this study is to determine the prevalence, estimate the ergonomic risk level of main traditional weaving tasks and other factors associated with low back pain. Data was collected from 814 sampled young workers of age between 14-17 years employed in traditional weaving from the central and Southern region of Ethiopia. Workers having musculoskeletal symptoms and the ergonomic risk level were assessed using Nordic and Quick Exposure Check tools respectively. In addition, the work-related stress was assessed by the Health and Safety Executives (HSE) Management standard questions. The prevalence of low back

pain symptoms was 48.9% and 14.0% having a severe form of Low Back Pain. From the five main tasks in the traditional weaving process, four of the tasks have very high and one task has medium ergonomic risk level. Working on a seat without back rest, long day work, thermal comfort of the workplace, working at night, workplace safety, health awareness and emotional abuse were statistically significant to low back pain symptoms at $P < 0.05$. The working practices in the traditional weaving process had high ergonomic risk for low back pain development to young workers. Strengthening the labor inspection services, work environment and tools improvement could be very important to reduce the incidence of low back pain.

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