

# Neck pain in Hong Kong: a telephone survey on consequences and health service...

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FULL TITLE: Neck pain in Hong Kong: a telephone survey on consequences and health service utilization.

**STUDY DESIGN:** A regionally representative telephone survey using a 2-stage randomization process. **OBJECTIVE:** (1) To investigate the prevalence and consequence of neck pain in terms of disability and rate of absenteeism from work. (2) To describe the health services utilization pattern of neck pain subjects and to analyse the factors associated with neck pain and health services utilization pattern. **SUMMARY OF BACKGROUND DATA:** There has been a lack of reliable information on the health service utilization pattern of neck pain subjects, the consequences and the patient perceived effectiveness of neck pain management in Hong Kong and Asian countries. **METHODS:** Subjects were interviewed on the sociodemographic characteristics, occurrence and consequences of neck pain, and the health utilization pattern. A random sample of the respondents was re-interviewed 7 to 10 days after the initial interview, by an independent interviewer for the reliability check. **RESULTS:** A total of 4640 subjects were interviewed. The 12-month prevalence was 64.6% (95% CI: 63.2%-66.0%). About 38.0% of these patients suffered from moderate to severe pain. Moreover, 17.7% of these subjects had to limit their social activities and 19% had to limit their work. About 25% of those subjects had consulted medical or health practitioners. Medical consultation is the majority and physiotherapy came second. Self-massage was the most preferred (83.3%) mode of self-care. Physiotherapy was regarded as the most effective health service, with 60% of the respondents' neck pain completely removed. Although most people chose self-massage to be the most effective self-care treatment, only one-third (30.2%) of them had their neck pain improved by less than a half. **CONCLUSION:** Neck pain is highly prevalent with an increasing impact in Hong Kong. More than one-third of neck pain patients suffered from moderate to severe pain and around 20% of them had to limit their work. About 25% of neck pain patient have consulted medical or health professionals. Physiotherapy and private medical clinic were the 2 service providers with high percentage of perceived complete improvement. There was a general trend that more neck pain patients used complementary therapies.

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