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Paper: Spring 2020 CPD questions

Personal Reflection:

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders in sonographers

Factors influencing ultrasound professionals' likelihood of developing WRMSDs include poor posture, repetitive movements, transducer pressure /poor grip, stress, workload, limited support or sense of control and other psychological factors.

Practitioners should remember that optimizing the examination should not be done at the detriment of their health and in general, the human arm is unsuited to ultrasound scanning, so care must be taken.

There is an essential need to consider ways to reduce the chance of injury ergonomically when scanning, eg moveable chairs and couches, optimizing the position of equipment and patient ensuring good posture and reducing strain. Adequate room size with optimal lighting and heating also need to be considered along with regular breaks and risk assessments.

Key areas of the body at risk of injury are the shoulder, neck, back, hand, wrist and fingers. Ideally the transducer should be held using a light grip with minimal or no pressure applied.

Sonographer work postures, work schedules, task rotation, admin support and ergonomic workplace equipment are all important factors in reducing WRMSDs.

Summary of best practices for reducing the risk of WRMSDs :

- Position the patient close to the sonographer.
- Perform some exams at the head end or foot of the exam table and try some exams with the patient seated.
- Use a palmar transducer grip whenever possible.
- Maintain a neutral wrist position when holding the probe.
- Utilize ergonomic features of the equipment to reduce arm abduction, reaching and neck and trunk twisting.
- Utilize breaks for muscle recovery.
- Optimize the computer work station for more comfortable positions,
- Avoid unnecessary bedside exams.
- Avoid performing the same type of exam repeatedly throughout the workday (eg TVS).
- Consider ergonomic feature when purchasing new equipment.
- Avoid static postures. It is import to incorporate movement into work activities.