

Correspondence: Health Issues among Radiologists: Toll they Pay to their Profession

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Dear Editor,

I read with interest your article titled 'Health Issues among Radiologists: Toll they Pay to their Profession' by Atwal SS et al., in the April issue [1]. The article had clearly described the ocular and musculoskeletal complaints which are very common among the radiologists. It had also touched upon the radiation hazards also with stress on newer protective apparel.

I would like to add another very important but less recognised health issue with diagnostic radiology-sedentary nature of the profession. It was recognised in 2008 by Fidler JL et al., who sought to determine the utility and efficacy of a walking workstation during computed tomographic scan reporting [2]. In fact, the detection rates were better for interpretation during walking technique than the conventional technique. Further, in 2016, Lamar DL et al., sought to quantify the sedentary work life of the radiologist [3], by surveying the levels of at-work and out-of-work sitting among radiology, paediatric and general medicine residents. They found that the radiology residents led more sedentary occupational lifestyle than others and they were also not aware of or not using dynamic workstations. However, radiology residents showed better activity during the interventional radiology postings.

The workstation based diagnostic radiology work performed by radiologists typically occurs in the seated position, leading to around 8 hours per day of sitting [4]. As sitting for long periods compromise metabolic health, increase incidence of cardiovascular disease, obesity and premature mortality risk, it is essential to modify sedentary behaviour at workplace and home [5].

I would also like to reiterate on the conditions grouped together as Work related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WMSD)-carpal tunnel syndrome, Repetitive Stress Injuries (RSI), bursitis and tendonitis, which are more common among the ultrasound users as well as workstation users. Ergonomic chairs, ergonomic workstations and ergonomic training are helpful in alleviating and preventing repetitive stress injuries and symptoms [6].

Radiologists must understand the health risks associated with sedentary behaviour and protect their health by implementing the following changes in their work routine: frequent standing, intermittent walking, Non Exercise Activity Thermogenesis (NEAT) like moving the legs and tapping the feet, stretching exercises and using ergonomic and dynamic workstations [2,4,6].

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