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**Title**

Risk factors for lower back pain

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**Rationale**

Predictors of lower back pain incidence can have great value in patient management. This study looks at the factors associated with low back pain in adult in a variety of occupational settings.

**Aims and Objective**

To determine whether there are factors identifiable from the patient history that help predict the risk of low back pain and whether the risk is affected by combining these factors.

**Design**

A retrospective self-completing questionnaire

**Subjects**

All participants were adults. A total of 432 questionnaires were collected and 405 were eligible for inclusion in the study.

**Methods**

Questionnaires were distributed in helicopter departure lounges for offshore workers on various oilrigs, college common room, school staffrooms. Some questionnaires were electronically distributed.

**Results**

303 males and 102 females were included in the survey. 39% had suffered from lower back pain lasting more than 2 days in the previous year with 24% visiting their GP for this. Low back pain was generally more prevalent in females (54.6% of total) compared to males (33.5), with the peak prevalence in the 40-49 year age group (males 11.5%, female 17.6%). Most (50%) of those with LBP were unemployed. Being overweight and smoking were associated with LBP in males but not females.

### **Conclusion**

When assessing risk factors for LBP, particular attention should be given to employment status and gender.