Co-relation of neck Rapid Upper Limb Assessment score with neck pain
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1. Introduction
The use of computers has increased exponentially in recent years. Studies have shown that 56% of workers use computers on the job and 62% of households own a computer. Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSD), especially involving the neck, are common in Information Technology (IT) professionals. The consequent loss of productivity and absenteeism imposes a heavy financial burden on the employers and family and social life of the affected person. Rapid Upper Limb Assessment (RULA) is a universally accepted tool for evaluating the postural risk for sedentary work involving sitting. According to this method a score is calculated for the posture of each body part. This study was aimed at studying the co-relation of neck RULA score with neck pain among IT professionals.

2. Methods
It is a descriptive report analysis study. The data was collected from 660 IT professionals as part of their ergonomic workplace assessment at their workstation. Demographic data were collected from the participants including age, gender, duration of computer usage per day, and the type of use (Laptop/Desktop). RULA scores were noted by experienced physiotherapists who were trained in calculating RULA scores. Nordic musculoskeletal pain Questionnaire was used to know the regional distribution of pain and its chronicity. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the age, gender, body area affected and distribution of video display users. Chi square test was used to find the association between the neck pain and neck RULA score.

3. Results
The study participants were predominantly males (76%). The mean age of the subjects was 32.63. 89% of the subjects were right handed. 55% of the population used laptops, 32% desktops and the rest used both. Median RULA score was 2. Commonest body parts involved were neck pain (52%) and low back pain (52%). Laptop users (without any modifications) were more likely to report neck pain than desktop users. Significant correlation (p>0.05) was noticed between high neck RULA score and neck pain.

4. Discussion
This study, like several previous studies, found that neck pain was common in IT professionals. Laptop users were more prone for neck pain than desktop users which was suggestive of improper monitor height as one of the risk factors. The correlation of a high neck RULA score with neck pain suggests postural risk factor as an important predisposing factor for WRMSD and also suggests that work station adjustment with appropriate monitor height adjustment could prevent neck pain among computer users.

References

