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Is there an increased risk of rehabilitation outpatient visits among physicians and surgeons comparing to general population ?

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Background and Aim: Objective: To investigate the prevalence and disease entity of physicians and surgeons who visited rehabilitation out-patient department (OPD) in Taiwan and further compared to the general population.

Design: An age-and gender-matched retrospective cohort study.

Setting: Taiwan's National Health Insurance Research Database (NHIRD)

Participants: Physicians (N=4221), surgeons (N=2193), and age-and gender-matched general

population (N=12 billion) who ever visited rehabilitation OPD between January 2002 and December 2011 were included in our study.

Interventions: Not applicable

Main Outcome Measures: The demographic characteristics, visited hospital type, person-years, and visited times-years were collected and analyzed. The top ten disease entities were also rank and evaluated.

Results: More percentages of physicians visited rehabilitation OPD than surgeons. However, there was no increased trend of the visited person-years and times-years of both physicians and surgeons from year 2002 to 2011. Doctors, including physicians and surgeons, tend to go to rehabilitation OPD in medical center than other smaller medical facilities when compared to general populations ($p < 0.0001$). The overall top ten disease entities were similar between physicians, surgeons, and general populations. The top three disease entities of doctors were Myalgia and myositis; Cervical spondylosis without myelopathy and Lumbosacral spondylosis without myelopathy. The top three disease entities of general populations were Lumbosacral spondylosis without myelopathy; Cervical spondylosis without myelopathy; and Adhesive capsulitis of shoulder respectively.

Conclusions: Our results suggest that the seek of rehabilitation intervention does not increase yearly among either doctors or general population. However, physicians seek more rehabilitation intervention than surgeons. Further investigation is needed to find out the reason since surgeons seemed to have more workload physically than physicians. Doctors prefer going to rehabilitation OPD in medical centers rather than local clinics. In contrast, general population chose local clinics more often. Last, the overall top ten disease entities showed that both low back complaints and neck-shoulder complaints are major health problem among each group, so the influence of work-related stress on the aspect of musculoskeletal health needs further investigation.

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