An Investigation of the Prevalence, Correlates and Potential Intervention Strategies for Musculoskeletal Disorders among School Teachers in Botswana

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Thesis submitted for

Doctor of Philosophy

November 2014

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Patience N. Erick

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Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge and thank the people who have guided, assisted and supported me over the duration of this thesis.

First and foremost I would like to thank my God for the grace and strength He gave me all the years of working on this thesis away from my family.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my principal supervisor, Professor Derek Smith for his expertise, patience and for providing the motivation, confidence and academic direction necessary to bring this project to completion and for future academic development. He was always ready to read my work and give timely and valuable feedback. Professor Smith guided this work and encouraged my independent thinking, and also helped build my academic career with his insights and encouragement. For this I will forever be grateful.

I would also like to thank Professor Eric Beh for his assistance and support. His understanding of statistics helped me with statistical analysis, interpretation and discussion of the results of this research.

I am highly indebted to the head teachers and management of the schools that participated in this research. I would also like to thank the individual teachers who
willingly participated in this study, without whom this research would not have been possible.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the University of Botswana (my employers) and the University of Newcastle for the scholarship to undertake this research. To my family and friends, thank you for your support.

I dedicate this thesis to my family. My husband Tebogo and our daughter Lethabo Erick, your constant support and love inspired me and made the journey worthwhile despite my absence from home. I will always be grateful for your understanding and believing in me. Finally, this goes to my parents and siblings for their support and encouragement during this period.
List of publications included as part of the thesis


**Paper 3:** Erick PN, Smith DR. The prevalence and risk factors for musculoskeletal disorders among school teachers in Botswana. *Occupational Medicine & Health Affairs.* 2014;2(4).


**Paper 5:** Erick PN, Smith DR. The development of an ergonomic training manual to help prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders in the teaching profession. *Safety and Health at Work.* (Under review).

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Statement of Contribution: Paper 5

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Erick PN, Smith DR. The development of an ergonomic training manual to help prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders in the teaching profession. Safety and Health at Work. (Under review).

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List of additional publication

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Abstract

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) represent a common occupational problem for working populations throughout the world. Despite their large demographic and associated potential for occupational health problems, few epidemiological studies have investigated MSD among teachers. Hence the overarching aim of this thesis was to investigate the prevalence and risk factors of MSD among school teachers in Botswana.

To address this aim the thesis presents five papers. Paper 1 describes a systematic review of previous research investigating prevalence and risk factors of MSD among teaching staff. Paper 2 describes a critical review of previous literature which investigated risk and protective factors of MSD among school teachers. These reviews were aimed at gaining insight of MSD among school teachers which was eventually used to inform some parts of the thesis. Paper 3 and Paper 4 describe a study of MSD among school teachers in Botswana. Using a cross-sectional study with anonymous self-administered questionnaire, this study aimed to investigate the prevalence and risk factors for MSD among school teachers in Botswana. The study also aimed to investigate the level of low back disability and associated risk factors. The study further investigated the impact of MSD among school teachers in Botswana. Paper 5 describes the development of an ergonomic training manual to help reduce the prevalence, progression and impacts of MSD among teachers. The study was aimed at determining the effectiveness of the training manual and to highlight any areas for improvement. Paper 6 summaries the findings of the study.
The concluding chapter of this thesis reviews and brings together the main findings of these six papers and makes recommendations for future research. The results of this thesis suggest that MSD is reasonably common among school teachers in Botswana, particularly MSD of the back, shoulder and neck. The study also suggests that MSD is complex and multifactorial in nature, and therefore, no single, specific intervention strategy alone would be entirely effective at reducing these disorders among teachers. The development of an ergonomic training manual for teachers as developed in the current study represents a positive step forward in the prevention and management of these disorders especially in developing countries. The results of this study also offer a significant contribution to the existing knowledge of MSD in the teaching profession.