

Abstract

Background: Headaches are increasingly recognized for their impact on quality of life and functional abilities. Musicians, due to the physical demands of their profession and the strain from prolonged asymmetric movements, are particularly susceptible to headaches, which can impair both their daily lives and performance.

Objectives: This study investigated headache prevalence and severity among 472 orchestra musicians in Norway, examining factors like age, gender, instrument type, work demands, locus of control, and upper body pain.

Methods: The study surveyed 472 professional orchestra musicians (66% response rate) from civilian and military orchestras in Norway. Headache occurrence and severity within the last 14 days were assessed using items from the Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25, while upper body musculoskeletal pain within the last 30 days was evaluated using the 2016 Living Conditions Survey. Standardized tools, including Pearlin and Schooler's Mastery Scale and the Job Content Questionnaire, were used to assess locus of control, job demands, and control, respectively. Binary logistic regression was applied to analyze headache occurrence, while a generalized linear model was used to evaluate headache severity in relation to the variables.

Results: Headache frequency among professional orchestra musicians in the last 14 days was 44.3% (n=209). 85% of musicians (N=400) reported musculoskeletal pain, with 70% (n=331) experiencing pain in the upper body. Age 30-39 significantly predicted headaches ($p=.014$, OR=3.29, 95% CI [1.27, 8.55]), and females had higher odds ($p=0.03$, OR=1.57, 95% CI [1.04-2.36]). Musicians with upper body pain had elevated risk ($p<0.001$, OR=2.85, 95% CI [1.79-4.52]). Job demands predicted headaches ($p=0.04$, OR=1.045, 95% CI [1.00-1.13]), while locus of control reduced odds ($p=0.02$, OR=0.94, 95% CI [0.90-0.99]). Instrument type and job control did not predict headaches. Age, gender, upper body pain, job demands, and locus of control were significant for headache severity.

Conclusion: Orchestra musicians not only frequently experience upper body pain but also face a heightened risk of headaches. Age, gender, locus of control, and job demands emerge as significant factors influencing both headache occurrence and severity. Addressing these factors is crucial for developing targeted interventions to mitigate the impact of headaches on musicians' quality of life and well-being.