La Medicina del Lavoro

Med Lav 2008; *99*, 5: 352-361

Movimenti ripetuti degli arti superiori: considerazioni sul tempo di latenza degli effetti

S. Nicoletti, N. Battevi*

Scuola di Specializzazione in Medicina del Lavoro, Università di Foggia

* IRCCS Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico, Mangiagalli e Regina Elena, EPM-CEMOC, Milano

Key words

Upper limb musculoskeletal disorders; latency period; occupational exposure

Summary

«Upper limb work-related musculoskeletal disorders (UL-WMSDs) and latency of effect». **Background:** *Trends in work-related upper limb musculoskeletal disorders appear to be in constant increase in industrialized countries. In Europe claims and compensation for these disorders have significantly increased.* **Objective:** *The aim of this study was to investigate the temporal relationship between the beginning of occupational exposure to repetitive movements and exertions of upper limbs, assessed through the OCRA index, and the manifestation of the disorders.* **Methods:** *Clinical and questionnaire information about 557 cases of UL-WMSDs in the upholstered furniture industry were analyzed in order to investigate the mean latency period of the disorders and to verify to what extent different levels of exposure influence the latency time.* **Results and Conclusions**: *The latency of UL-WMSDs is influenced by the level of exposure to risk, measured by means of the OCRA index. Shorter latency times were found for wrist/hand tendonitis, with a mean latency time of 5,4 years and with a greater sensitivity to the level of exposure assessed with the OCRA index value. This might support a sort of predictive value with reference to other UL-WMSDs with longer latency. Probably a latency period of 12 years may be suggested as the cut-off limit to assess a causal relationship between tendon or canalicular WMSDs and occupational exposure to repetitive movements and exertions of upper limbs.*