

Associations between Physically Demanding Work and Life-Style: Results from the Swedish WOLF study

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Conclusion

A physically demanding work, especially work including repetitive or heavy lifting, was associated with unfavourable life-style factors, also after controlling for age, sex and socio-economic status. This may be due to fatigue and increased need for recovery among those with physically demanding jobs. Different socio-cultural contexts for different occupations may also play a part.

Introduction

Leisure-time physical activity and exercise are well-known protective factors for several chronic diseases. The associations between work related physical activity and health outcomes are less clear and having high physical demands at work may be related to an unfavourable life-style.

Aim

The aim with the present study was to explore the associations between work related physical activity and life-style factors.



Photo: Patrik Svedberg

Methods

Data from the Swedish **Work, Lipids and Fibrinogen (WOLF) study**, collected in 2009 was used. The study comprised 4,026 working men and women (mean age 51.5 years).

Information on physical activity at work and leisure-time, smoking, moist snuff use, consumption of fruit, vegetables and fast food, and overweight was collected by questionnaires.

Multivariable logistic regression models were used to test the associations between work related physical activity and life-style factors.

Results

About one third (32 %) of the study population were standing or walking the main part of the working day, while 18 % reported repetitive or heavy lifting.

In analyses adjusted for age, sex and socio-economic status, standing or walking at work were significantly associated with smoking (OR 1.32, 95% CI 1.04-1.68) and low intake of vegetables (OR 1.33, 95% CI 1.13-1.58), while repetitive or heavy lifting was associated with smoking, moist snuff use, overweight and less leisure-time physical activity (figure 1).

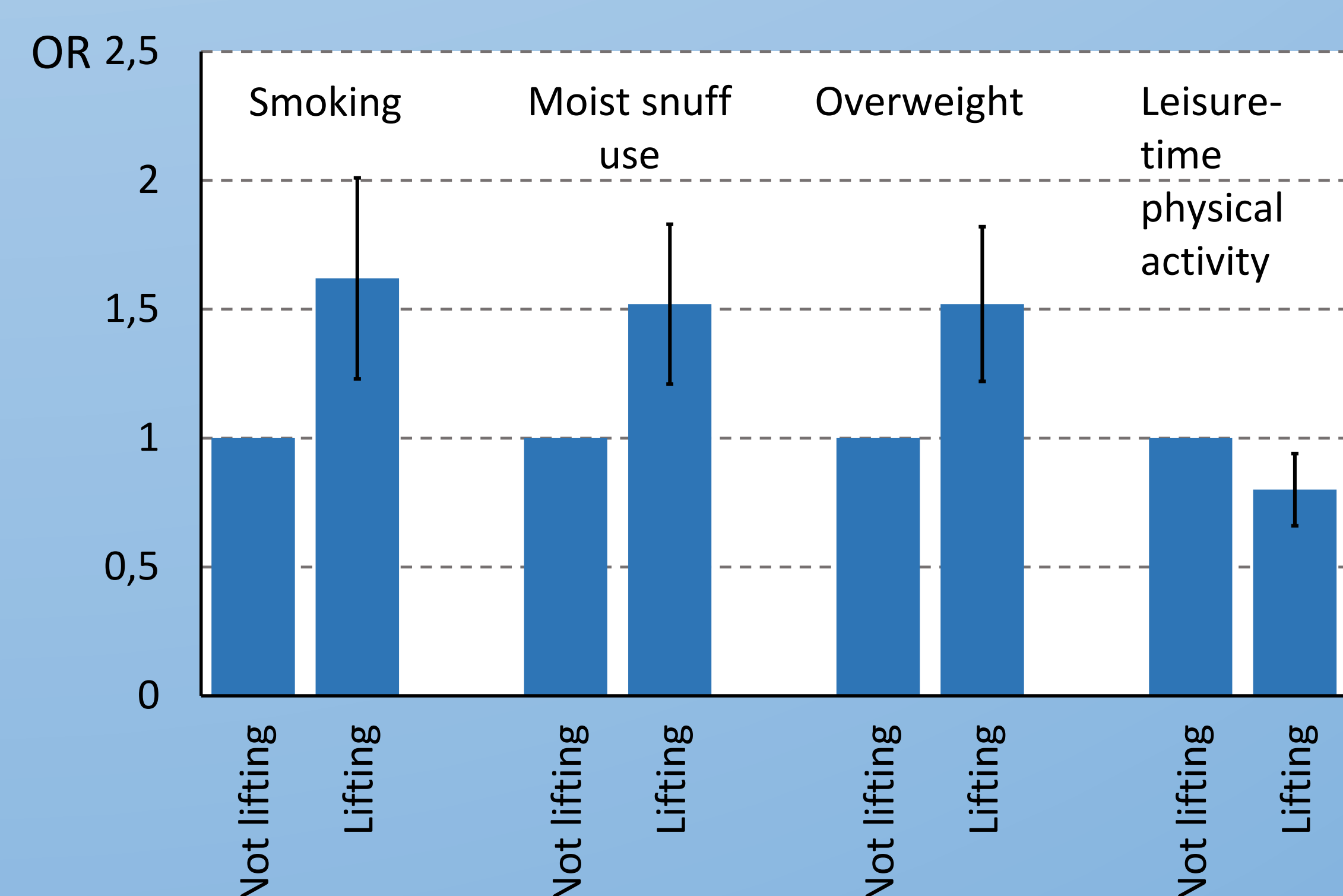


Figure 1. The association between repetitive or heavy lifting at work and life-style factors, adjusted for age, sex and socio-economic status

