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Pain catastrophizing as a predictive factor for developing musculoskeletal dysfunction amongst adolescents in a school environment

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Numerous factors have been identified as risk factors for developing musculoskeletal pain amongst adolescents. Pain can have a negative impact on the ability of a learner to concentrate and perform at school. Poor workstation set up at home and at school, prolonged awkward sitting postures in front of desk top computers and laptop computers, carrying of laptop bags and heavy schoolbags are some of the risk factors that have been identified. A more recent risk factor for developing musculoskeletal pain is the concept of catastrophizing. A high catastrophizer may be at risk for developing musculoskeletal pain and this factor needs to be identified in a learner sample prior to the design and implementation of an intervention program. A randomized control trial was conducted with a population of South African adolescent learners (n=127) in a school environment to determine the effect of a computer-related ergonomics intervention program on pain catastrophising levels and the prevalence of musculoskeletal pain. The results showed that pain catastrophising levels amongst adolescent learners can be modified and this may reduce the risk for developing chronic pain in the long term.

Biography

Ingrid Sellschop is a Clinical Physical Therapist in South Africa. She completed her PhD in Physiotherapy in 2015 from the University of the Witwatersrand. She is a Clinical Practitioner as well as Guest Lecturer at the Master's program for Orthopedics and Pain Management in Physiotherapy. She has a special interest in Behavioral Medicine and Pain Management. She has presented her research at local and international congresses.

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