

Introduction

Musculoskeletal disorders are, unfortunately, relatively common in the caring professions. Nurses, dentists, ambulance personnel, sonographers, radiologists and many other health care specialists are at risk of developing discomfort either due to awkward postures that have to be adopted to undertake the task, or manual handling of patients. Due to the extensive skills of many healthcare professionals, costs of absence can be significant. Although aches and pains may be common in the workforce, it is possible to prevent them and reduce their severity through appropriate ergonomic design. This may include the design of the equipment, the way the task is done and the work environment, as well as the organisational context in which the work is done.

Strategic Advice

Patient safety is an increasingly important issue in the healthcare industry. The human factors issues that arise due to the complex systems integration in ensuring patient safety is new to this industry.

Hu-Tech has experience of applying ergonomics/human factors to a wide range of issues within the healthcare profession. We understand the constraints that need to be worked within, and are able to work with you to develop and apply practical solutions.

Examples of recent work carried out include:

- Advice on Ambulance Design – assisting to prepare a design specification for a new Ambulance with the aim of minimising the amount of manual handling by ambulance personnel while positioning equipment to facilitate the effective treatment of the patient



- Mechanical transport of patients on stairs - providing expertise in the design and usability of the chair and in the training material that was issued with the stair climber
- Assessment of trolley beds – providing expert advice on the ease of use in operational settings, suitability for purpose and on operational effectiveness
- Design of film viewing machine resulting in the manufacturer making adaptations
- Dental ergonomics – production of a short awareness video that could be viewed by any of the dentists working within the NHS Trust



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