French good practice guidelines for medical and occupational surveillance of the low back pain risk among workers exposed to manual handling of loads

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Titre: French good practice guidelines for medical and occupational surveillance of the low back pain risk among workers exposed to manual handling of loads

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Several clinical practice guidelines related to the assessment and management of low back pain (LBP) have been published with varied scopes and methods. This paper summarises the first French occupational guidelines for management of work-related LBP (October 2013). Their main originality is to treat all the three stages of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of work-related LBP. The guidelines were written by a multidisciplinary working group of 24 experts, according to the Clinical Practice Guidelines method proposed by French National Health Authority, and reviewed by a multidisciplinary peer review committee of 50 experts. Recommendations were based on a large systematic review of the literature carried out from 1990 to 2012 and rated as strong (Level A), moderate (B), limited (C) or based on expert consensus (D) according to their level of evidence. It is recommended to deliver reassuring and consistent information concerning LBP prognosis (Level B); to perform a clinical examination looking for medical signs of severity related to LBP (Level A), encourage continuation or resumption of physical activity (Level A), identify any changes in working conditions and evaluate the occupational impact of LBP (Level D). In case of persistent/recurrent LBP, assess prognostic factors likely to influence progression to chronic LBP, prolonged disability and delayed return to work (Level A). In case of prolonged/repeated sick leave, evaluate the pain, functional disability and their impact and main risk factors for prolonged work disability (Level A), promote return to work measures and inter professional coordination (Level D). These good practice guidelines are primarily intended for professionals of occupational health but also for treating physicians and paramedical personnel participating in the management of LBP, workers and employers.

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