

## **PRACTICE OF HOME ERGONOMICS AMONG RURAL AND URBAN WOMEN OF MATALE**

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The goal of ergonomics is to ensure a good fit between the workers and their job, to make the work comfortable and efficient. Correct working posture is the ideal remedy to prevent work related musculoskeletal injuries. Home ergonomics can help women carry out their daily chores efficiently and comfortably which has not been highlighted in Sri Lanka. The objective of this study was to describe and compare the practice of home ergonomics among women in an urban and a rural area in the district of Matale.

A community based cross sectional study was carried out with the participation of 588 women (aged between 35-55 years) selected through simple random sampling from a rural and an urban Grama Niladari division. Women with previous neurological diseases, musculoskeletal disorders, problems in hearing or vision and pregnant or lactating mothers were excluded. The practice of home ergonomics and the level of knowledge regarding postures and movements when performing household activities were assessed through an interviewer administered questionnaire. Practice and awareness on six main postures and movements were assessed.

Correct sitting posture ergonomics were practiced by 59% women in the urban and 53% in the rural area. Reported correct sleeping posture was 21% among urban women and 15% in rural women ( $p < 0.05$ ). About two thirds of urban women and half of rural women practiced correct movement pattern when sweeping ( $p < 0.01$ ). A little less than half of urban and rural women practiced correct postures during cooking. In washing clothes 39% of urban women and 32% rural women practiced correct posture when using the machine whereas 30% urban women and 19% rural women showed correct posture when using the manual method ( $p < 0.01$ ). Only about one tenth of all women followed correct techniques in lifting. In conclusion practice of home ergonomics was poor in both rural and urban areas but it was worse among rural women compared to urban women.