

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-53101

Date: 02-08-2025

Title: Burden and Predictors of Musculoskeletal Disorders among Informal Porters in Kigali, Rwanda: A Cross-Sectional Analysis

Recommendation:

Accept as it is
 Accept after minor revision.....YES.....
 Accept after major revision
 Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		YES		
Techn. Quality		YES		
Clarity		YES		
Significance	YES			

Reviewer Name: Dr Payal Adwani (PT)

Date: 02-08-2025

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

This is a well-structured and much-needed epidemiological study that assesses the prevalence and risk factors of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) among porters in Kigali's informal labor sector. The topic is relevant, the methodology is appropriate, and the findings have both clinical and policy implications. While the article presents novel data in an under-researched population, a few improvements are necessary to enhance clarity.

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Appraisals / Strengths

● Novel Population Focus:

This study is among the first to document MSD prevalence in informal porters in Rwanda, filling a critical knowledge gap.

● Robust Methodology:

Stratified random sampling and multivariable logistic regression enhance the validity and generalizability of findings.

● Use of Validated Tool:

The Standardized Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire is a globally recognized and validated instrument.

● Comprehensive Analysis:

The study analyzes both socio-demographic and occupational risk factors, and adjusts for confounders using appropriate models.

REVIEWER'S REPORT

- **Policy and Practical Relevance:**

The findings have direct implications for occupational health strategies in informal economies.

- **Ethical and Cultural Sensitivity:**

Ethical approvals were obtained, local language versions were used, and participants' rights were well-respected.

Critiques / Limitations

- **Self-Reported Symptoms:**

Reliance on self-reported MSDs without clinical confirmation may lead to reporting or recall bias.

- **Cross-Sectional Design:**

The design limits causal inference; longitudinal or follow-up studies are needed to explore chronicity and outcomes.

- **Generalizability Limits:**

The study is restricted to taxi parks in Kigali; findings may not reflect porters in rural or other urban Rwandan settings.

- **Low Representation of Females:**

While not explicitly stated, gender distribution should be clarified, especially if all or most participants are male.

- **Minor Language Errors:**

A few typographical and grammatical issues (e.g., plural-singular agreement, phrasing) should be addressed to improve readability.

- **Data Tables Could Be Improved:**

Some tables could benefit from clearer formatting, labeling, and inclusion of statistical significance markers.

- **Discussion Could Expand on Interventions:**

The paper emphasizes the problem but provides limited discussion on realistic ergonomic interventions for this population.