

## **Results of the “Focus Group Activity” in Greece**

**The principal conclusion of the focus group activity was that the participants identified neck pain as their main symptom connected to working hours at the office and sustained sitting position. They also reported their need for appropriate exercise at workspace.**

Since we had the SBN questionnaire's data on bio-psycho-social aspect of neck pain office employees (a tool recently developed by the Coordinator's research upon office employees), our basic concern was to specify the office employees' needs and ideas on current gaps in workspace for coping with neck pain. Two focus groups of 8 mixed male and female participants were conducted in Greece in different companies.

Concerning symptoms, most of the participants referred that muscle soreness; muscle spasm and tightness are the most frequently mentioned complains. Two of them referred pain at the medial area of the elbow from sustained use of the mouse combined with neck pain complaints. Muscle tightness and occasional muscle pain was reported in the area of upper trapezius and between the shoulder blades. Headaches and dizziness were present in some of the cases especially after many hours of sitting position in front of the computer.

Bad sitting position (not adjustable chairs and desks) and prolonged hours of sitting position without breaks were mentioned as main causes increasing the symptoms.

Another strong evidence from this Focus group activity was that cognitive behavioral treatment of patients with neck pain and therapeutic exercise programs would have a positive effect on pain intensity and functional capacity of office employees.

Answering the question about possible ways to deal with the problem, the participants agreed the neck pain has a multidimensional nature and a modern approach to chronic pain should include a combination of therapies: drug therapies, psychological therapies, therapeutic exercise, electrostimulation therapies, surgical therapies and lifestyle changes, as well as complementary and alternative medicine.

Main causes for not being able to adhere to an exercise program were their tight daily schedule combined with a very competitive working environment that increases stress. All of the participants wished they could know how to apply specific exercises to produce acute relief of their symptoms in a short period of time without leaving their office. It was impressive to hear all the participants agreeing in their need of educating themselves in appropriate exercise protocols coping with neck pain.