

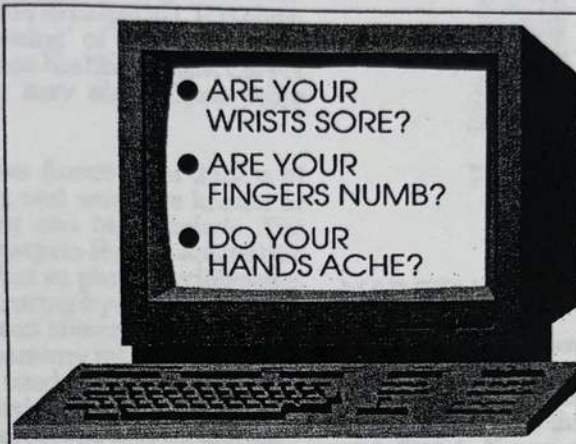
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RSI EPIDEMIC AT SUNY-CORTLAND

Work is taking its toll on clerical and secretarial staff at SUNY-Cortland, according to a recent survey conducted by CSEA Local 605.

CSEA 605 has put a priority on getting management to remedy the conditions which cause RSI and to assist those workers already injured.

After receiving complaints from a number of office workers throughout the campus, the Union began circulating a brief questionnaire focusing on hand/wrist trauma symptoms. More than 90 percent of the clerical/secretarial staff responded.



The situation the workers face at SUNY-Cortland is not unique. RSIs are now the leading cause of reported occupational illness in the U.S., with cases more than doubling in the past two years. There are two main causes: poor workstation design and stress.

The results are alarming. Almost two-thirds of the total respondents are experiencing at least one of the symptoms which warn of developing repetitive strain injury (RSI). These symptoms include aching fingers, hands and/or wrists; a tingling or numb sensation at night after work; unusual clumsiness such as dropping things or having difficulty doing fine motor tasks like buttoning a shirt.

The stress is related to increasing workload and growing specialization of job tasks.

RSI is preventable. For more information on this illness and how to prevent it, see two previous issues of **FYI**, September 1990 and June 1991. Or call the Labor Coalition, 277-5670.

More than one quarter of the respondents have sought medical assistance. Diagnoses include conditions such as pinched nerves, ganglion cysts, thoracic outlet syndrome, and carpal tunnel syndrome. Some have undergone surgery.

