

## **SAND abstract No. 127 from the BEACH program 2008–09**

### **Subject: Chronic pain in general practice patients**

**Organisation supporting this study:** Janssen-Cilag Pty Ltd

**Issues:** The proportion of patients attending general practice who suffer from chronic pain; conditions causing chronic pain; the severity of pain (by pain severity grades) for these patients; the management of their chronic pain; GP and patient satisfaction with current pain management for patients who experience chronic pain.

**Sample:** 3,013 patients from 103 GPs; data collection period: 01/04/2008 – 05/05/2008.

**Method:** Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2008–09' available at: <[www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND\\_abstracts.htm](http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm)>. Chronic pain was defined as 'pain experienced every day for three months in the six months prior to this consultation' (Blyth FM et al. 2001). Severity was graded as: Grade I = low disability/low intensity; Grade II = low disability/high intensity; Grade III = high disability/moderately limiting; Grade IV = high disability/severely limiting (Von Korff M et al. 1992). Satisfaction was graded on a scale of 1 (highly dissatisfied) to 5 (highly satisfied). Pain impact was measured with the 'Living better with pain' log (American Chronic Pain Association 2005), from 1 (best) to 10 (worst).

### **Summary of results**

The age–sex distribution of the patient sample reflected that of all patients at all BEACH encounters 2007–08. Of the 3,013 respondents, 590 (19.6%, 95% CI: 16.9–22.3) had chronic pain. The age-specific rates showed that prevalence increased with patient age, from 3% among those aged less than 25 years, to 33% in those aged 75 years and over. Sex-specific rates showed no significant difference between the sexes in prevalence of chronic pain.

The 'cause of pain' was given for 577 patients: cancer was the cause for 2.4% of these; osteoarthritis for 47.7%; other arthritis for 5.6%; back problems for 29.1%; and 29.3% of patients nominated an 'other condition' as the cause of their chronic pain, 51.3% of these being musculoskeletal conditions and 22.6% neurological conditions. Pain severity was recorded for 559 patients, and ranked as Grade I for 26.7%, Grade II for 36.5% of, Grade III for 27.2%, and Grade IV for 9.7% of these patients.

Current medication management was provided for 578 chronic pain patients and 58.8% were currently managing their chronic pain with medication only. Medication in combination with other treatment was used by 28.7%; 6.4% were using other managements without medication, and 6.1% were not using any type of pain management. For the 506 patients taking medication, 776 medications were recorded, of which 32.6% was paracetamol, and 8.6% was paracetamol/codeine. Tramadol (8.4%), oxycodone (6.7%) and meloxicam (5.2%) were also frequently recorded. A total of 241 other management methods were reported for the 203 patients using them, physiotherapy (25.7% of the other pain management methods) and exercises (25.3%) being most common.

GP and patient satisfaction level with the patient's pain management was recorded for 568 patients, on a scale of 1 (highly satisfied) to 5 (highly dissatisfied). The mean GP satisfaction level was 2.4, and the mean patient satisfaction level was 2.5. For 563 respondents who ranked the impact of pain (when in pain) on activity, sleep and mood (1 = best; 10 = worst), the mean level of impact on activity was 4.5, on sleep was 4.7, and on mood was 4.8.

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Definition of Chronic Pain - *'pain experienced every day for three months in the six months prior to this consultation'*\*

\* Blyth FM et al. 2001. Pain 89(2-3):127-134.

**Severity of Chronic Pain - Chronic Pain Grades\*\***






- I. = low disability - low intensity
- II. = low disability - high intensity
- III. = high disability - moderately limiting
- IV. = high disability - severely limiting

\*\* Von Korff M et al. 1992. Pain 50(2):133-149.

### Live Better with Pain Log

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**Pain Level**











No Pain
Worst Pain

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

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**Activity**











Normally active
No activity

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

---

**Sleep**












Fully rested
Poor-quality sleep

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

---

**Mood**

Cheerful & calm
Depressed, anxious

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Adapted from: Live Better with Pain Log; © Copyright: 2005

The American Chronic Pain Association

<http://www.theacpa.org/documents/8%205x11%20Pain%20Log%202-8-06.pdf>

# PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about **CHRONIC PAIN**.  
 You may tear out this page as a guide to completing the following section of forms.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Ask **ALL** of the **next 30 PATIENTS** the following questions **in the order in which the patients are seen**.

Please **DO NOT** select patients to suit the topic being investigated.

## Chronic Pain

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate box whether this patient suffers from **chronic pain** (*defined\* as 'pain experienced every day for three months in the six months prior to this consultation'*).

If **no** chronic pain has been experienced you should **end the questions** here.

\*Blythe FM et al. 2001. Pain 89(2-3):127-134

## Causal conditions

Please advise the **condition/s** you identify as being the **cause/s** of the patient's chronic pain.

Tick as many as apply.

## Severity

Please **use your clinical opinion** to rank the **severity** of the patient's pain **when the patient is in pain as you perceive it** according to the Chronic Pain Grades\*\*:

- I = low disability - low intensity;
- II = low disability - high intensity;
- III = high disability - moderately limiting;
- IV = high disability - severely limiting.

\*\*Von Korff M et al. 1992. Pain 50(2):133-149

(this Chronic Pain Grade list is also on the chronic pain card in your research kit)

## Chronic pain management

Please advise how the patient's pain is currently being managed.

Please use the space provided to provide details of any **medications** or **other management** currently being used by the patient.

If the patient's pain is **not currently being managed** please tick the box labelled '**NO management**'.

## Pain level and functioning

Referring to the 'Live better with pain log' tool on the chronic pain card please **ask the patient** to indicate their **pain, activity, sleep** and **mood** levels when they are in pain and write the corresponding number in the space provided.

## Satisfaction with pain management

Please circle a number on each of the scales to indicate:

1. **your satisfaction** level with the **pain management**
2. **the patient's satisfaction** level with their pain management.

<p><b>Does this patient suffer from chronic pain?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No → <b>End questions</b></p> <p>BL101C</p>	<p><b>If 'yes' from what condition?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cancer</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Osteoarthritis</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other arthritis</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Back problem</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other cond'n</p> <p>(please specify)</p>	<p><b>When the patient is in pain how severe do you judge the pain is?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grade I</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grade II</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grade III</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grade IV</p> <p>(Pain grades on card or green sheet)</p>	<p><b>If the pain is currently being managed, how?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medication... (please specify)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><u>Name &amp; Form</u></td> <td><u>Strength</u></td> <td><u>Dose</u></td> <td><u>Frequency</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1. _____</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. _____</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other management _____ (please specify)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO management</p>	<u>Name &amp; Form</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>Dose</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	1. _____				2. _____				<p><b>Satisfaction with pain management</b></p> <p><b>GP satisfaction level</b></p> <p>1      2      3      4      5</p> <p>Highly satisfied      (Please circle a number)      Highly dissatisfied</p> <p><b>Patient satisfaction level</b></p> <p>1      2      3      4      5</p> <p>Highly satisfied      (Please circle a number)      Highly dissatisfied</p>	<p><b>Ask the patient to rate the impact of pain on the following functions when in pain:</b> (see card)</p> <p>Pain level _____</p> <p>Activity _____</p> <p>Sleep _____</p> <p>Mood _____</p>
<u>Name &amp; Form</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>Dose</u>	<u>Frequency</u>														
1. _____																	
2. _____																	