

SAND abstract No. 150 from the BEACH program 2009–10

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; severity of pain (by pain severity grades) for these patients; management of chronic pain; GP and patient satisfaction with current pain management.

Sample: 2,780 patients from 94 GPs; data collection period: 14/07/2009 – 17/08/2009.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled *SAND method 2009–10* at:

www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm. **Method for this study:** 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). These definitions were supplied on a card for participating GPs.

Summary of results

The age–sex distribution of patients differed significantly from that of patients at all 2008–09 BEACH encounters, with greater proportions aged 1–4 years and 25–44 years, and lesser proportions aged 65–74 years and being male patients. Of the 2,780 respondents, 523 (18.8%, 95% CI: 16.3–21.3) had chronic pain. The age-specific rates showed prevalence increasing with patient age. Sex-specific rates showed no significant difference between sexes in chronic pain prevalence.

The 'cause of pain' was given for 510 (97.5%) patients: cancer was the cause for 2.4% of these; osteoarthritis for 48.6%; other arthritis for 7.1%; and back problems for 29.2%. Nearly one-third (29.2%) of patients nominated 'other condition' as the cause of their chronic pain, 65.1% of these being musculoskeletal conditions, and 14.7% neurological conditions. Pain severity was recorded for 500 patients (95.6%), and ranked as Grade I for 23.6%, Grade II for 37.8% of, Grade III for 29.6%, and Grade IV for 9.0% of these patients.

Current management was reported for 496 patients (94.3%), of whom 52.6% were currently managing their chronic pain with medication only. Medication in combination with other treatment was used by 31.9%, while 8.5% were using other managements (no medication), and 7.1% were not using any type of pain management. For the 419 patients taking medication, 623 medications were recorded, of which 32.9% was paracetamol, and 10.0% was paracetamol/codeine. Oxycodone (6.7%), meloxicam (5.8%) and tramadol (5.8%), were also frequently recorded. A total of 247 other management methods were reported for the 200 patients using them, physiotherapy (29.6%), heat therapy (10.5%) and exercise (8.9%) being most common.

GP satisfaction with pain management was recorded for 497 patients, and patient satisfaction with pain management for 502 patients. The mean GP satisfaction level was 2.5, and the mean patient satisfaction level was 2.7. For 498 patient 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 4.7, on sleep was 4.8, and on mood was 4.8.

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AIHW Australian GP Statistics and Classification Centre, 2010. SAND abstract No. 150 from the BEACH program: Chronic pain in general practice patients. Sydney: AGPSCC University of Sydney. ISSN 1444-9072

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.

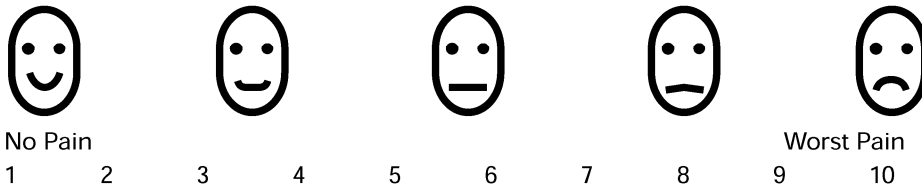
Severity of Chronic Pain - **Chronic Pain Grades****

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

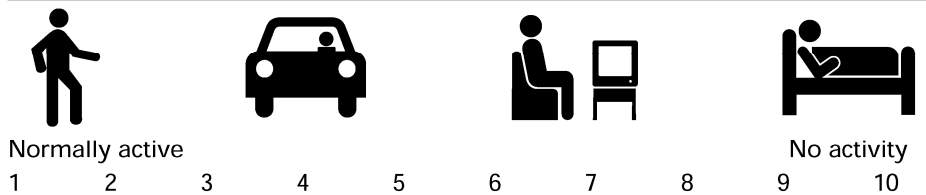
** Von Korff M et al. 1992. Pain 50(2):133-149.

Live Better with Pain Log

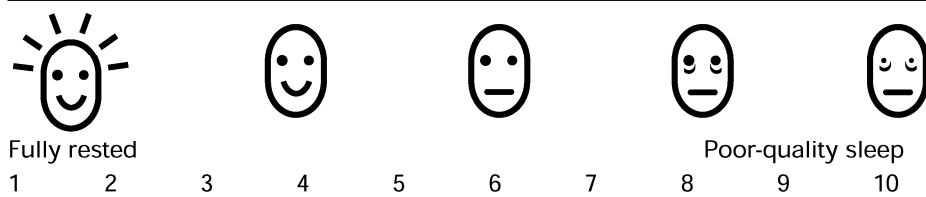
Pain Level



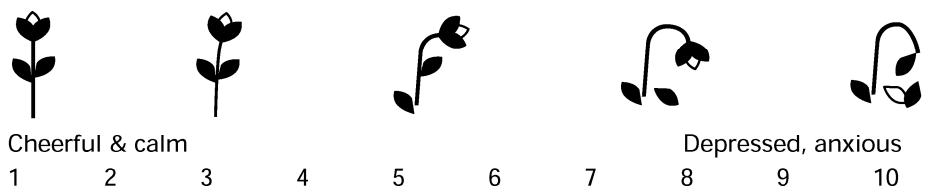
Activity



Sleep



Mood



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.

*Blyth 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>Does this patient suffer from chronic pain?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No → End questions</p> <p>BL114B</p>	<p>If 'yes' from what condition?</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>When the patient is in pain how severe do you judge the pain is?</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>If the pain is currently being managed, how?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medication... (please specify)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><u>Name & 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 & Form</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>Dose</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	1. _____				2. _____				<p>Satisfaction with pain management</p> <p>GP satisfaction level</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Highly satisfied (Please circle a number) Highly dissatisfied</p> <p>Patient satisfaction level</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Highly satisfied (Please circle a number) Highly dissatisfied</p>	<p>Ask the patient to rate the impact of pain on the following functions when in pain: (see card)</p> <p>Pain level _____</p> <p>Activity _____</p> <p>Sleep _____</p> <p>Mood _____</p>
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