PROJECT INFORMATION

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Developing Measures of Pain Appraisal and Pain-Related Self-Efficacy for People Living with Chronic Pain

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What was the research about?

Chronic pain, which lasts for months or even years, can disturb people's daily lives and their relationships with others. Doctors want to measure how chronic pain affects people's lives so they can help their patients manage pain.

In this study, the research team wanted to measure two aspects of living with and managing chronic pain:

- **Pain appraisal** describes how people think about their pain. It measures how much people worry about their pain and how well they cope with pain or distract themselves from thinking about it.
- **Pain-related self-efficacy** describes how confident a person is that they can live well with pain.

The research team created two pools of questions, called item banks, to measure each of the two aspects of living with chronic pain. From these larger item banks, the team created and tested brief versions using two and six questions. These brief versions take people less time to finish than the full item banks.

What were the results?

The research team created a 24-question item bank for pain appraisal and a 29-question item bank for pain-related self-efficacy. Testing showed that people understood the questions well. The team also found that the questions accurately measured pain appraisal and pain-related self-efficacy. When patients

completed the brief versions of the item banks, they provided information similar to that gathered by the full item banks.

Who was in the study?

The study included 795 people living with chronic pain across the United States. Of these people, 86 percent were white, 9 percent were African American, and 5 percent were other races. The average age was 55 and 64 percent were female. Patients had many different types of chronic pain, including low back pain or pain from multiple sclerosis.

What did the research team do?

To develop questions for the item banks, the research team worked with patient advisors and pain experts. Next, the team conducted focus groups and interviews with patients living with chronic pain. These patients gave feedback on whether the questions asked about important features of pain in ways that were easy to understand. Finally, the team tested the full item banks and the brief versions with a large group of people with chronic pain. These people answered the questions online or on paper.

What were the limits of the study?

The research team couldn't include people with every type of chronic pain. For example, the study didn't include people with carpal tunnel disease or cancer-related pain. People with types of chronic pain that weren't in the study may have answered the questions differently.

Future research could study how people of different races or ages, or with other types of pain answer the questions. In addition, researchers could look into how to help doctors and patients use these item banks in health care.

How can people use the results?

Researchers could use the item banks in studies about treating and managing chronic pain. Doctors can use this research to help patients better manage pain.

*To learn more about this project, visit
www.pcori.org/Amtmann104.*