PREVALENCE OF CHRONIC PAIN AMONG MEDICAL AND DENTAL STUDENTS

AUTHORS:
1. DR. SAFIA LIAQAT, ISRA UNIVERSITY HYDERABAD
2. DR. REHAN NABI, AYUB TEACHING HOSPITAL ABBOTTABAD
3. DR. ANILA UROOJ, SINDH GOVT. LYARI GENERAL HOSPITAL KARACHI

ABSTRACT:
Pain is defined as unpleasant sensory and emotional experience described in terms of real or potential injuries, always subjective in its experiences, being a major complaint of individuals looking for health services. Chronic pain is pain that lasts a long time. This survey study was conducted among different medical and dental college students of different medical and dental colleges. Different questions regarding chronic pain i.e. pain felt for six months or more at the same site, time since onset, existence or not of triggering factors, use of painkillers and pain location. All the data was kept confidential. A total of 140 medical and dental students participated in the study. There were 89 males and 51 females in the study. The mean age of the students was 22.79±2.76 years. A total of 34 students including 21 females and 13 males were having chronic pain. The mean duration of chronic pain was 7.45±3.67 months. The predominant site for chronic pain was backache.

Keywords: Chronic Pain, Medical Students, Dental Students

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INTRODUCTION:
Pain is defined as unpleasant sensory and emotional experience described in terms of real or potential injuries, always subjective in its experiences, being a major complaint of individuals looking for health services. Chronic pain is pain that lasts a long time. In medicine, the distinction between acute and chronic pain is sometimes determined by the amount of time since onset. Two commonly used markers are pain that continues at 3 months and 6 months since onset, but some theorists and researchers have placed the transition from acute to chronic pain at 12 months. Others apply the term acute to pain that lasts less than 30 days, chronic to pain of more than six months duration, and subacute to pain that lasts from one to six months. A popular alternative definition of chronic pain, involving no fixed duration, is “pain that extends beyond the expected period of healing”.

Chronic pain may originate in the body, or in the brain or spinal cord. It is often difficult to treat. Epidemiological studies have found that 8% - 11.2% of people in various countries have chronic widespread pain. Various non-opioid medicines are initially recommended to treat chronic pain, depending on whether the pain is due to tissue damage or is neuropathic. Psychological treatments including cognitive behavioral therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy may be effective for improving quality of life in those with chronic pain. Some people with chronic pain may benefit from opioid treatment while others can be harmed by it. In people with non-cancer pain, patients might try opioids only if there is no history of either mental illness or substance use disorder. Opioids for chronic pain should be stopped if they are not effective at treating the patient's pain.

Severe chronic pain is associated with a decrease in the likelihood of
survival over the next 10 years of a patient’s life, particularly in patients with heart disease and respiratory disease. People with chronic pain tend to have higher rates of depression but it is not clear whether the pain causes depression or whether depression causes the chronic pain. Chronic pain can contribute to decreased physical activity due to fear of making the pain worse. Pain intensity, pain control, and resiliency to pain can be influenced by different levels and types of social support that a person with chronic pain receives (1-3).

MATERIAL OF METHODS:
This survey study was conducted among different medical and dental college students of different medical and dental colleges. Different questions regarding chronic pain i.e. pain felt for six months or more at the same site, time since onset, existence or not of triggering factors, use of painkillers and pain location. All the data was kept confidential. All the data was analyzed with SPSS Ver. 23.0. Relevant statistical analysis was performed. The qualitative variables were presented as frequency and percentages. The quantitative variables were presented as mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS:
A total of 140 medical and dental students participated in the study. There were 89 males and 51 females in the study. The mean age of the students was 22.79±2.76 years. A total of 34 students including 21 females and 13 males were having chronic pain. The mean duration of chronic pain was 7.45±3.67 months. The predominant site for chronic pain was backache.

DISCUSSION:
Chronic pain varies in different countries effecting anywhere from 8% to 55.2% of the population. It affects women at a higher rate than men, and chronic pain uses a large amount of healthcare resources
around the globe. A large-scale telephone survey of 15 European countries and Israel found that 19% of respondents over 18 years of age had suffered pain for more than 6 months, including the last month, and more than twice in the last week, with pain intensity of 5 or more for the last episode, on a scale of 1 (no pain) to 10 (worst imaginable). 4839 of these respondents with chronic pain were interviewed in-depth. Sixty-six percent scored their pain intensity at moderate (5–7), and 34% at severe (8–10); 46% had constant pain, 56% intermittent; 49% had suffered pain for 2–15 years; and 21% had been diagnosed with depression due to the pain. Sixty-one percent were unable or less able to work outside the home, 19% had lost a job, and 13% had changed jobs due to their pain. Forty percent had inadequate pain management and less than 2% were seeing a pain management specialist. In the United States, chronic pain has been estimated to occur in approximately 35% of the population, with approximately 50 million Americans experiencing partial or total disability consequently. According to the Institute of Medicine, there are about 116 million Americans living with chronic pain, which suggests that approximately half of American adults have some chronic pain condition. The Mayday Fund estimate of 70 million Americans with chronic pain is slightly more conservative. In an internet study, the prevalence of chronic pain in the United States was calculated to be 30.7% of the population: 34.3% for women and 26.7% for men. In Canada it is estimated that approximately 1 in 5 Canadians live with chronic pain and half of those people have lived with chronic pain for 10 years or longer. Chronic pain in Canada also occurs more and is more severe in women and Canada's Indigenous communities. Sleep disturbance, and insomnia due to medication and illness symptoms are often experienced by those with
chronic pain. These conditions can be difficult to treat due to the high potential of medication interactions, especially when the conditions are treated by different doctors. Severe chronic pain is associated with increased risk of death over a ten-year period, particularly from heart disease and respiratory disease. Several mechanisms have been proposed for this increase, such as an abnormal stress response in the body’s endocrine system. Additionally, chronic stress seems to affect risks to heart and lung (cardiovascular) health by increasing how quickly plaque can build up on artery walls (arteriosclerosis). However, further research is needed to clarify the relationship between severe chronic pain, stress, and cardiovascular health (4-6).

REFERENCES: