

# Pain Survey Switzerland

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## Introduction

The perception of long-term pain has shifted somewhat in recent years. For many years regarded as one of many other possible symptoms of a disease. In recent years, however, chronic pain has grown to be acknowledged as a disease entity of its own, independent from the underlying disease that initially caused the acute pain.

The percentage of a given population that suffers from pain in general and from chronic pain specifically is difficult to assess. The difficulties in collecting these data may have various reasons, what remains is the fact that reliable data are scarce.

In order to address this lack of basic data, at least in Switzerland, the Swiss section of the "Association Internationale Ensemble contre la Douleur", supported by Janssen-Cilag AG in Baar, decided to collect data as another step on the way to treating pain as a disease.

## Objectives

The objectives of this non-randomized, opt-in survey, conducted in Switzerland, were to assess the frequency and the nature of pain in patients visiting their doctor.

## Methods

- Resident doctors in Switzerland were invited to participate.
- On one single day, individually chosen by the participating doctors, EVERY patient visiting the surgery, irrespective of the visit being due to pain or not, was asked to fill in a questionnaire.
- Patients stating to have pain were asked more detailed questions concerning the nature of their pain, whether they suffered from pain most of the day, the duration of pain, the interference of pain with their daily life.
- The questionnaire was then handed to the treating physician who was asked to give the patient's diagnoses.

## Results

The survey was conducted from February to June 2001. 59 resident doctors participated in the survey. Of the 1109 participating patients, 950 (85.7%) stated that they were currently suffering from pain. 111 patients (11.7%) suffered from headache alone, 839 patients (75.7%) were suffering from other pain or other pain combined with headache.

Table 1. Demographic data for the participating patients

All patients (n=1109)	
Age (mean (SE), median, range):	47 years (18), 47 years, 2-99 years
Sex (F / M / no data):	631 (56.9%) / 463 (41.7%) / 15 (1.4%)
Demographic data for patients stating to suffer from pain (n=950):	
Age (mean (SE), median, range):	51 years (20), 51 years, 5-99 years
Sex (F / M / no data):	556 (58.7%) / 382 (40.2%) / 10 (1.1%)

Figure 1. Age distribution of patients (n=1109)

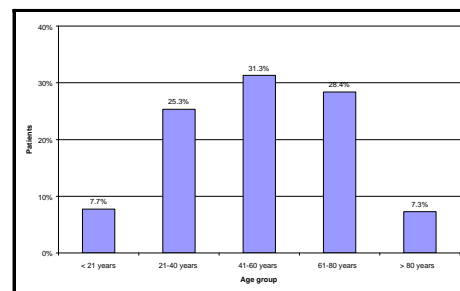
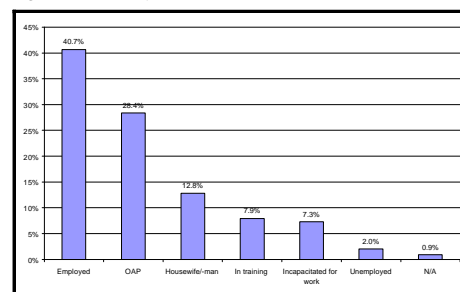


Figure 2. Employment status of patients (n=1109)



- More than 85% of patients coming to see their doctor suffer from some sort of pain. More than 60% of these patients suffer from pain for more than 3 months already. More than 50% of patients with pain suffer from pain most part of the day.
- Main underlying diseases were stated to be chronic back pain and/or arthrosis (Figure 5).
- 34.3% of patients suffering from pain are in pain for most of the day and are in this condition for more than 3 months already. In 85.2% of these patients pain interferes more than slightly with activities the patients regard as normal (Figure 3).

Figure 4. Age distribution of "Figure 3"-subgroup

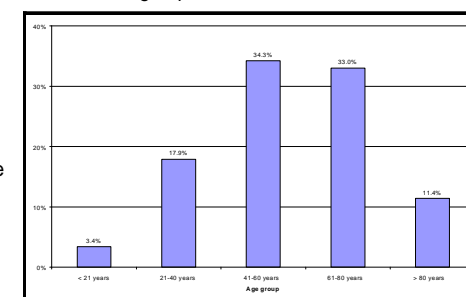


Figure 3. Interference with normal activities in patients stating to suffer from pain most of the day for more than 3 months (n=326)

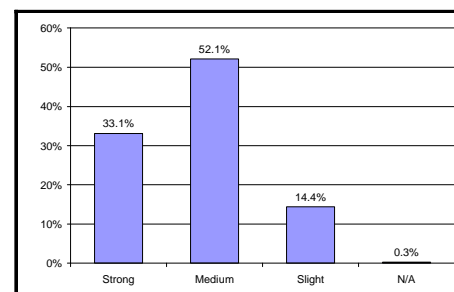
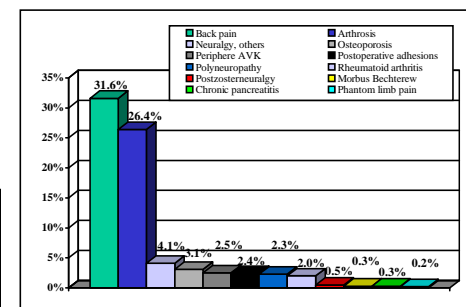


Figure 5. Underlying disease that caused pain Physician's diagnosis ("others" is not included)



## Conclusions

- About 30% of patients coming to see their doctor suffer from pain most of the day for already more than 3 months. These patients are likely to be, or to become, chronic pain patients.
- Pain is still undertreated in Switzerland.