

Integrative medicine interventions found to significantly reduce pain, improve quality of life

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An integrative approach to treating chronic pain significantly reduces pain severity while improving mood and quality of life, according to a new study from the Bravewell Practice-Based Research Network (BraveNet) published last month in *BioMed Central Complementary and Alternative Medicine* journal. Researchers found a reduction in pain severity of more than 20 percent and a drop in pain interference of nearly 30 percent in patients after 24 weeks of integrative care. Significant improvements in mood, stress, quality of life, fatigue, sleep and well-being were also observed.

"Chronic [pain](#) is very difficult to treat," said lead researcher Dr. Donald Abrams, a cancer and integrative medicine specialist at the University of California San Francisco Osher Center for Integrative Medicine. "While there have been some therapeutic advances, many patients with [chronic pain](#) become resistant to conventional medical treatments or suffer adverse effects from widely used [prescription medications](#) with high addictive potential. The results from this study are particularly encouraging as chronic pain is the number one condition for which patients seek care at integrative healthcare clinics."

Chronic pain affects nearly 116 million American adults, with estimated costs tallying up to \$635 billion annually. The prospective, observational study tracked patients' measures of pain, quality of life, mood, stress, sleep, fatigue, sense of control, overall well-being, and work productivity

in 252 patients at nine different clinical sites.

In keeping with the integrative medicine philosophy of individualized, patient-centered care, no standardized pre-specified clinical intervention for chronic pain was prescribed for all study participants. Instead, practitioners at each of the network sites devised integrative treatment plans for participating chronic pain patients. All BraveNet sites include integrative physicians, acupuncturists, mindfulness instructors, and yoga instructors; some also incorporate massage therapists, manual medicine therapists, fitness/movement specialists, dietician/nutritionists, psychologists, healing touch therapists, and other energy practitioners.

The results of the study were consistent over the 24-week duration of the trial, suggesting the possibility of sustainable effects of the integrative interventions.

More information: www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6882/13/146

Provided by GYMR

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