

Baseline pain severity predicts worse long-term LBP outcomes

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Image courtesy of Blausen Medical

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(HealthDay)—Patients' baseline pain and the perception that their pain will persist are significant predictors of poor outcomes for low back pain (LBP) over the short and long term, according to a study published in the August issue of *The Journal of Pain*.

Paul Campbell, Ph.D., from Keele University in the United Kingdom, and colleagues studied 488 patients who saw their physician about LBP. Patients were assessed at six months and five years. A score of 2, 3, or 4 on the Chronic Pain Grade defined clinically significant LBP at follow-up. Thirty-two potential predictive factors were categorized as demographic, physical, psychological, and occupational.

The researchers found that baseline [pain](#) intensity conferred a 12 percent increased risk of poor outcomes at six months (relative risk [RR], 1.12), and patients' belief that their LBP would persist conferred a 4 percent increased risk (RR, 1.04). The same factors seen in the six-month model—pain intensity (RR, 1.09) and a belief that their LBP would persist (RR, 1.06)—also predicted outcomes at five years.

"This study has shown that [pain intensity](#) experienced during a period of primary care consultation, and [patients'](#) perception about whether their back pain will persist, were significant predictors of poor outcome at six months and at five years," the authors write.

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