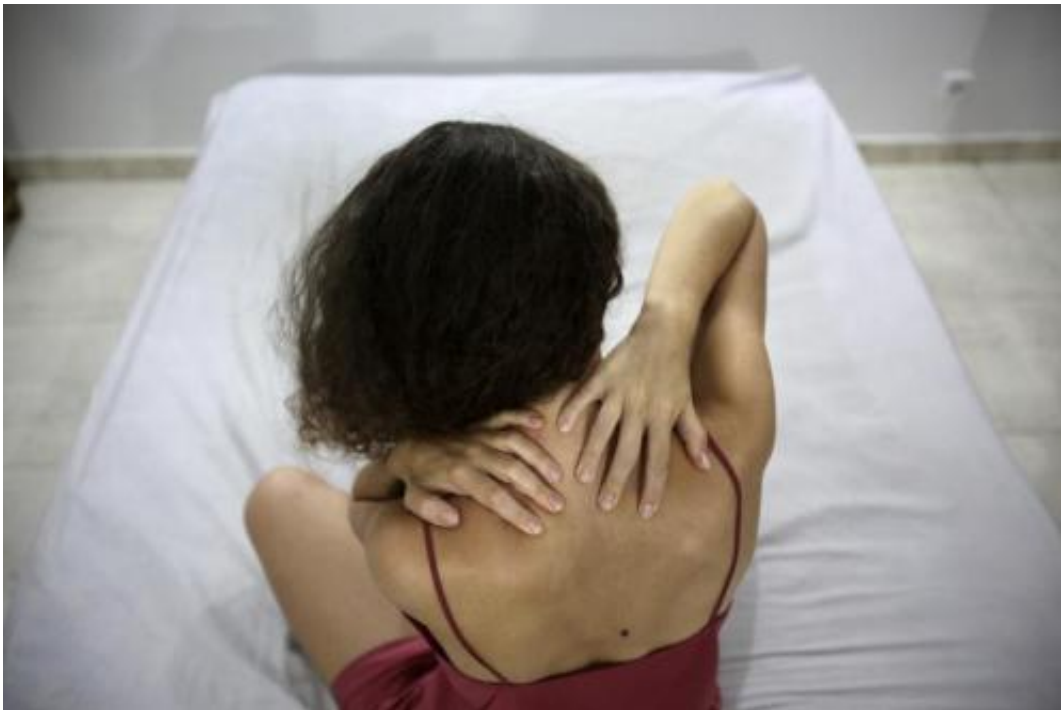


# Pain tolerance levels between men and women are similar

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Resilience, a person's ability to overcome adverse circumstances, is the main quality associated with pain tolerance among patients and their adjustment to chronic pain. This is the result of a new study carried out at the University of Málaga that shows that the effect of gender on this ability is not as significant as originally thought. Credit: SINC

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at the University of Málaga that shows that the effect of gender on this ability is not as significant as originally thought.

Over the years a number of [clinical trials](#) have shown important gender differences with regard to susceptibility to [pain](#) through illness, effectiveness of medications and recovery after anaesthetic. Furthermore, these results coincide with general lore where it is often said that women tolerate pain better than men.

However, a new study led by researchers at Malaga University with the aim of analysing the differences between men and women in terms of their experience with chronic pain has dispelled this theory, revealing that these differences are minimal.

Quite the opposite, it is a person's resilience -the ability to overcome adverse [circumstances](#)- that determines the high or low acceptance of pain, as it is related to a series of characteristics that provide the individual with resources to cope with [chronic pain](#).

400 patients with chronic spinal pain (190 men and 210 women) treated in primary care centres took part in this study and the findings show more similarities than differences between the two sexes.

"More resilient individuals tend to accept their pain, that is, they tend to understand that their ailment is chronic and they stop focusing on trying to get the pain to disappear, to focus their energy on enhancing their quality of life, despite the pain," Carmen Ramírez-Maestre, the main author and researcher at the Andalusian institution, told SINC.

"In this regard," continued Ramírez-Maestre, "patients who are able to accept their pain feel less pain, they are more active on a daily basis and have a better mood".

## Fear of pain

Also, the findings, which were published recently in *The Journal of Pain*, showed that patients that feared pain also experienced significantly more anxiety and depression.

"However, this fear was only related to a greater degree of pain in the samples of men and this was the only difference found between the sexes," concludes the author.

**More information:** Carmen Ramírez-Maestre, Rosa Esteve. "The role of sex/gender in the experience of pain. Resilience, fear and acceptance as central variables in the adjustment of men and women with chronic pain". *The Journal of Pain*, 2014.

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