Study IDs pain descriptors for varying stages of low back pain

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(HealthDay)—Varying pain descriptors may be useful when evaluating

patients with different stages of low back pain (LBP), according to a study published online April 30 in *PAIN Practice*.

Philipp Hüllemann, Ph.D., from University Hospital Schleswig-Holstein in Kiel, Germany, and colleagues characterized LBP (acute, subacute, and chronic) for 35,446 patients using clinical questionnaires. Pain intensity, pain descriptors, and functional impairment were also evaluated.

The researchers found that neuropathic components were most frequent in chronic LBP patients between the ages of 51 and 60 years, whereas elderly LBP patients showed more nociceptive pain. "Pressure pain" and "pain attacks" were the most frequently reported pain descriptors used in all stages of LBP, whereas "burning" and "prickling" were most frequently used to describe the chronic stage. Pain medication intake was the highest among patients after back surgery.

"Burning and prickling were revealed as possible indicators for LBP chronicity," the authors write. "Combined with pain attacks and pressure pain, these four pain descriptors might be a promising adjunct to pain intensity in terms of outcome parameters for future LBP studies."

Several authors disclosed financial ties to Pfizer.

More information: Abstract/Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)

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