

Researchers want us to talk about pain and not suffer in silence

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How do we experience and cope with pain? Researchers from our Centre for Pain Research want to know more via this new survey.

At the start of national Men's Health Week, researchers from the University are embarking on a new study to understand more about the differences in how men and women express pain and how this might impact on their overall health.

Studies suggest that [women](#) often report more [pain](#) than [men](#), yet it is unclear whether this is because they feel pain more acutely or because men are more likely to 'suffer in silence' and under-report pain.

Pain, including [chronic pain](#) such as [low back pain](#), is very common and affects [large numbers](#) of people. Estimates suggest that up to 20 per cent of the population will be in pain at any one time and many of these will, as a consequence, experience high levels of distress and disability.

Now researchers from our Centre for Pain Research are urging both men and women to think more about the pain they might be experiencing for research that could lead to better approaches to help people manage pain.

Lead researcher and Deputy Director of the University's Centre for Pain Research, Dr Ed Keogh, said: "We know that men are generally less likely to visit their GPs, have health checks and live healthy lives when compared to women. We also envisage that men may be more likely to suffer in silence and under-report pain, partly due to embarrassment or reluctance to discuss concerns.

"It might sound obvious, but pain is essentially a message to pay attention to harm that may or may not be taking place in your body – it says – 'take care'. Men's reluctance to address pain might have a significant, negative impact on their overall health.

"Part of thinking about men's health this week must be about breaking down whatever barriers exist that prevent men from seeking help. So, we need to look beyond the idea that pain is a sign of weakness, and ask how men can use pain to stay fit, healthy, and alive for longer".

As part of the team's research, they want both men and women to take part in a new [online survey](#) that will help them reveal which issues are most relevant when it comes to how we experience pain.

They are looking for men and women aged 18 and over to complete a short, [online survey](#). This asks questions about your experiences of pain, including what you do when you are in pain, as well as about your general health and lifestyle including who you speak to when ill.

More information: The survey, which takes 15 – 20 minutes to complete and is completely anonymous, can be completed via bathpain.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_4ZLEyJ9WIVSZ8zz

Provided by University of Bath

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