

Community-based program improves depression in chronic pain patients

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A community-based pain management programme for patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain has improved depression and social integration, according to a study led by Queen Mary University of London (QMUL).

The researchers, in collaboration with Warwick University, Royal Holloway and University College London, designed a group pain management programme on 403 adults and compared this intervention with a control group of 300 adults who received usual care and a relaxation CD.

Trial participants all had [chronic musculoskeletal pain](#), which often does not respond well to drugs. The [pain management](#) programme that was investigated is a novel, brief, psychologically based group intervention directed at increasing participants' confidence and their repertoire of skills around managing pain.

The majority of participants in the [intervention group](#) reported feelings of depression and [social integration](#) had improved at six and 12 months on; and a cost-effectiveness analysis showed that the cost of this intervention (£145 per person) falls within the range defined as acceptable by the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Professor Steph Taylor from QMUL's Blizard Institute said: "The study holds out the tantalising prospect that the new intervention could improve the psychological well-being of patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain, but further research is needed before this conclusion can be firmly drawn."

The researchers also looked at effects on anxiety, pain-related self-efficacy, pain acceptance and [pain intensity](#) at 12 months. However there was no reported effect by participants in the intervention group.

Pain-management programmes can be effective at reducing distress and improving self-efficacy and quality of life. However, when based in hospitals they can be expensive and it is hard to apply them to large numbers of people.

More information: Taylor SJC, Carnes D, Homer K, Kahan BC, Hounsoume N, Eldridge S, et al. (2016) Novel Three-Day, Community-Based, Nonpharmacological Group Intervention for Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain (COPERS): A Randomised Clinical Trial. *PLoS Med* 13(6): e1002040. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1002040](#)

Provided by Queen Mary, University of London

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