

UK Pain Messages

There are a large number of messages used for Chronic Pain by a variety of organisations. The aim of the UK Pain Messages is to define and gain consensus and consistency over the facts and figures used when highlighting the burden of Chronic Pain in the UK. These messages, separately in the public domain, have been approved by the following organisations/individuals: Faculty of Pain Medicine, Royal College of General Practitioners' Chronic Pain Lead, British Pain Society, Chronic Pain Policy Coalition and importantly patients via Pain UK.

- The Department of Health recognises chronic pain as a long-term condition in its own right and as a component of other long-term conditions.¹
- It is estimated that 14 million people live with chronic pain in England alone. In 2011, 31% of men and 37% of women reported persistent pain. Of these, 25% (or one in four – 3.5 million) said that their pain had kept them from usual activities (including work) on at least 14 days in the previous three months.²
- A person living with pain will have a very poor quality of life – much worse than other conditions, and as bad as significant neurological diseases such as Parkinson's.²
- Low back pain is ranked highest out of 291 conditions studied by the Global Burden of Disease study, ranking number one for years lost to disability worldwide. In fact four of the top 12 disabling conditions globally are persistent pain conditions (low-back and neck pain, migraine, arthritis, other musculoskeletal conditions).³
- 41% of people who attended pain clinics report that their pain has prevented them from working, and 13% have had to reduce their hours.⁴
- 66% of people attending A&E seeking help with pain had more than three visits to a healthcare professional in the preceding six months.⁴
- The 2008 Chief Medical Officer report states that 25% of pain sufferers lose their jobs; 16% of sufferers feel their chronic pain is so bad that they sometimes want to die.⁵
- Men and women in the lowest income households are more likely to report chronic pain (42%), compared to those in the highest quintile (27%).²
- Severe chronic pain is associated with increased risk of mortality, independent of socio-demographic factors.⁶
- Attending specialist pain services improves quality of life (in total, 56% of providers reported post-treatment improvement in EQ5D-3L score, and 76% reported improvement specifically in pain-related quality of life).⁴



References

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