Today:

- Nearly 50 million adults suffer from chronic or severe pain in the U.S. *
- More than half of Americans with chronic or severe pain suffer symptoms on a daily basis. *
- Common forms of chronic pain include those associated with migraine and with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), as well as lower back pain and jaw pain. *
- Veterans are 40% more likely to experience severe pain, particularly back and joint pain, compared to nonveterans. †
- Approximately 35% of people who suffer from chronic pain also suffer from depression. Δ
- Individuals with migraines, tension headaches, lower back pain and fibromyalgia have a greater risk of suicide compared to the general population. Θ

The Cost:

- The total economic burden of pain is an estimated $635 billion annually. *
- In 2010, pain management care cost Medicare and Medicaid $86 billion. *
- On average, workers with chronic pain miss a total of 345 hours of work per year due to symptoms, resulting in a total of $109.2 billion in lost productivity. *

HOW RESEARCH SAVES LIVES:

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a spinal cord stimulation system (SCSS) to treat chronic pain in the torso and limbs. While not a first-line approach, SCSS is showing significant promise for individuals with unmanaged pain. In trials, 75% of participants saw a 50% reduction in pain within three months.*
- Duloxetine, originally approved as an antidepressant, has been shown to be effective in treating the pain associated with such high burden diseases as chronic lower back pain, osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia.*

HOW RESEARCH SAVES MONEY:

- Studies suggest alternative treatments, such as meditation or exercise, may lead to statistically significant improvements in pain for some patients. Utilization of non-drug treatments could reduce the annual $17.8 billion currently spent on prescription drugs for chronic pain. *,
- Approximately 12% of all Americans suffer from migraines. Studies have found aerobic exercise, when used as the primary intervention for migraines, can lead to a 40% reduction of headache frequency. This provides a promising cost-effective avenue to reduce the $5.4 billion cost of treating chronic migraines annually. *,
Hope for the Future:

- Researchers at Harvard University have observed neuro-inflammation in areas of the brain associated with chronic pain. The results not only provide potential treatment options, but the possibility of an objective way to measure the presence or intensity of a patient’s pain. *

- Researchers at Tulane University have developed a non-opioid pain relief medication. In preclinical trials, the new treatment provided greater pain relief and decreased side effects in comparison to many currently available treatments. 

- A study from the University of Arizona found exposure to green LED strips reduced levels of neuropathic pain in animals. A small clinical trial testing this new treatment in fibromyalgia patients will determine if this is a potential avenue for non-opioid treatment of pain. 

National Survey: More than Half Know Someone Who Sought Pain Medicine

Do you know anyone who experienced pain so severe that they sought prescription medicines to treat it?


The Bottom Line:

The burden of chronic pain on our citizens, workforce and health care system is staggeringly high, and pain-associated costs are increasing. Research that investigates all aspects of pain management, from the causes of pain to more effective, non-addictive treatments, are needed to help millions of patients suffering from this debilitating condition.

Prevalence of Arthritis-Attributable Severe Joint Pain Among Adults with Arthritis, 2015

Research!America
241 18th Street South
Suite 501
Arlington, VA 22202
703.739.2577
www.researchamerica.org
info@researchamerica.org

The Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation is a founding partner in this series of fact sheets. www.laskerfoundation.org

**Source:** Center for Disease Control and Prevention


+ UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA NEWS <<UANEWS.ARIZONA.EDU>>