

New Brief on What People Living with Chronic Pain Want Doctors to Know

A new issue brief has been released entitled "[What I Want my Doctor to Know About How Arthritis and Chronic Pain Affect My Everyday Life](#)" under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR).

Based on interviews conducted with people living with a disability due to arthritis, who are on long-term opioids or have stopped taking opioids after developing opioid use disorder (OUD), results from the interviews suggest individuals want their doctors to:

- Talk with them in detail about how they can treat chronic pain and improve function;
- Treat the whole person, thinking beyond their health condition;
- Describe what happens if medication does not control their pain or improve function;
- Explain the signs and symptoms of OUD and the treatment plan should they develop OUD; and
- Outline other options for managing pain if they develop OUD and cannot take opioids anymore.

[Download the issue brief.](#)

PMSIG Research: Abstracts, Articles and Reviews

Every other month, the Pain Special Interest Group provides members with updates on new topics, new information and research related topics. Please feel free to submit a topic or research question to dana-dailey@uiowa.edu. If you would like to contribute a topic and need help preparing the information, please contact Dana. She would be happy to assist you.

Applications for Chronic Pain

There are over 7 billion smartphone users in the world the growth of applications (apps) is growing. According to www.statista.com, the anticipated growth of app revenues for 2018 were over 365 billion U.S. dollars and projected to be more than 935 billion U.S. dollars by 2023. When it comes to apps for health and medicine, you can find over 165,000 apps available.

New apps for pain and pain management are coming available all the time. Most often applications are designed for either the person or the provider. Preferences for which app to choose will vary dependent on the needs of the person or provider. Clinicians seek apps that can serve a wide range of people, reduce liability, facilitate information sharing, support reimbursement and integrate with the electronic medical record. Members of the public want an app at minimal or no cost and is easy to access, offers a secure site, is effective and able to be shared with a provider.

Applications typically are designed around three primary topic areas: tracking or diaries, education or intervention based apps. Tracking diaries offer a variety of options including questionnaires and scales for pain-related measures such as pain intensity, fatigue, mood, sleep, activity, disease symptoms. These apps that are designed for the person and may also provide sharing capabilities with a provider. Applications related to education include disease

information and offer electronic or video education. Intervention-based applications offer a wide range of programs including exercise, activity, psychological interventions, yoga, relaxation and mindfulness meditation.

The following considerations should be taken into account when choosing an application: cost, ease of use, does it do what you want, accessibility, equipment needed, evidence, validity and reliability, engagement, support and two-way communication. Cost for applications varies from \$0 to \$10.00 or more. As you consider applications, cost may be an important factor for you or your patient. In addition, the operating system and its compatibility with your system and your patient's system will be important.

What is the evidence for applications? The evidence in this field is emerging. Some apps have been tested for effectiveness and many have not. In 2015, Lalloo completed a review article which found limitations in comprehensive pain self-management in applications¹. Machado completed a systematic review of apps for low back pain and found a lack of evidence based content, goal setting and social support functions². Jamison focused on a self-developed chronic pain self-management application and found more active participants used it less with decreased recall bias for ratings³. Zhao et al found 36 apps with a pain diary function with limitations for use in clinical practice⁴.

Here are examples of current applications related to the topic of pain. It is not meant to be an all-inclusive list, but rather offers a variety of topics to explore.

Tracking or Diary Applications

My Pain Diary
Chronic Pain Tracker
PainScale
Catch My Pain
Manage My Pain
Migraine Buddy

Education or Intervention Based Applications

WebMD Pain Coach
iBeatPain for Teens
eMTCP Music App – from the American Chronic Pain Association
Insight Timer Meditation for Pain
Headspace Pain Management - Meditation
YOGAmazing

References

1. Lalloo C, Jibb LA, Rivera J, Agarwal A, Stinson JN. "There's a Pain App for That": Review of Patient-targeted Smartphone Applications for Pain Management. *Clin J Pain*. 2015;31(6):557-563.

2. Machado GC, Pinheiro MB, Lee H, et al. Smartphone apps for the self-management of low back pain: A systematic review. *Best practice & research Clinical rheumatology*. 2016;30(6):1098-1109.
3. Jamison RN, Jurcik DC, Edwards RR, Huang CC, Ross EL. A Pilot Comparison of a Smartphone App With or Without 2-Way Messaging Among Chronic Pain Patients: Who Benefits From a Pain App? *Clin J Pain*. 2017;33(8):676-686.
4. Zhao P, Yoo I, Lancey R, Varghese E. Mobile applications for pain management: an app analysis for clinical usage. *BMC medical informatics and decision making*. 2019;19(1):106.