

Help your patients take long-lasting control of pain

As a physiotherapist, I regularly interact with people experiencing untreated pain, ranging from mild or moderate to severe and long-lasting. When not effectively treated and relieved, ongoing pain can have a detrimental effect on quality of life.¹ Furthermore, inadequate acute pain management in particular, can increase the risk of chronic pain.²



Written by Aisling Frawley,
Department of Clinical Medicine,
Trinity College Dublin

A meta-analysis has shown menstrual pain is very common in young women and studies have shown it impacts quality of life.⁶

Managing acute long-lasting pain

It's important to consider the type and source of acute pain when choosing how best to treat it.

NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen, are recommended as first line analgesics for lower back pain and period pain.^{8,9}

Research shows that, when it comes to what patients are looking for from pain relief, long-lasting pain relief over indexes on key benefit sought by body pain sufferer's vs other pain ailments.¹¹

This is an important factor to consider when advising patients which analgesic to take for their pain, since by decreasing the overall intensity of the pain perceived by the patient, less overall pain medications are used,⁷ thereby potentially reducing any possible medication side effects and misuse.

Acute pain serves as a warning to alert the body to a problem, with the aim of preventing further tissue injury.³ Acute pain lasts less than 3 months and is typically treated with analgesics.

Chronic pain on the other hand, persists beyond the expected time of healing or beyond 3 months.³

The wide range of over-the-counter analgesics means it can be difficult for patients to choose the most suitable medicine to self-manage their pain, highlighting the importance of the pharmacist's role - and in Ireland trust in pharmacists' health advice is high, it is cited as the reason 48% of people choose the pharmacy they visit.^{4,12}

This article will outline the most-prevalent pain types and provide evidence-based guidance for managing acute long-lasting pain in particular.

Common pain presentations in pharmacy

Irish research from February 2022⁵ shows that musculoskeletal pain is highly prevalent, with 54% of pain sufferers experiencing body pain in the past 2 months.

Further research has shown that up to 44% of all body pain occasions remain untreated, which could lead to chronic pain and also increase the risk of impacting patients' quality of life.^{1,10}

In summary

- When not effectively treated and relieved, ongoing pain can have a detrimental effect on quality of life.¹
- According to research, pharmacists have an important role to play in helping patients choose the right medication for their acute pain needs.^{4,12}
- Research shows that 84% of Irish people buy their analgesics from a pharmacy - your recommendation can make a long-term difference to a patient's pain.⁵
- When selecting analgesics for acute pain management, consider the type and source of the pain, and take patients' desire for sustained pain relief into account along with safety and tolerability.^{7,11}

References

- 1 Journal of Pain and Symptom Management. Volume 24, Issue 1, Supplement 1, July 2002, Pages S38-S47. Accessed April 2022. The impact of pain management on quality of life - PubMed (nih.gov)
- 2 Sinatra R. Causes and consequences of inadequate management of acute pain. Pain Medicine, 2010
- 3 Youssef S. Clinical guidelines and evidence base for acute pain management. Pharm J 2019;303(7929):44-48. Accessed April 2022. Clinical guidelines

and evidence base for acute pain management - The Pharmaceutical Journal (pharmaceutical-journal.com)

- 4 The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland: Public Survey - Attitudes to Pharmacy in Ireland, 2016. Accessed April 2022. Public Survey: Attitudes to Pharmacy in Ireland (thepsi.ie)
 - 5 Reckitt market research. Toluna* and Harris Interactive survey of Irish adults 18+ (n=306). February 2022.
 - 6 BMC Complement Altern Med. 2019; 19: 22. Accessed April 2022. The effectiveness of self-care and lifestyle interventions in primary dysmenorrhoea: a systematic review and meta-analysis - PMC (nih.gov)
 - 7 A Review of Management of Acute Pain. Mo Med. 2013 Jan-Feb; 110(1): 74-79. Accessed April 2022. A Review of Management of Acute Pain - PMC (nih.gov)
 - 8 NICE. Low back pain and sciatica in over 16s: assessment and management. Published November 2016. Last updated 7. December 2020. Accessed April 2022. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng59>
 - 9 NICE. Clinical Knowledge Summaries. Primary dysmenorrhoea. Last revised November 2018. Accessed April 2022. <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/dysmenorrhoea/>
 - 10 Winkle Study 2018; An updated understanding of the pain & treatment landscape. January 2018. Accessed April 2022.
 - 11 Insights Pain Survey, September 2020. Accessed April 2022.
 - 12 Pharma Focus Debrief. July 2019. Accessed April 2022.
- RB-M-101097

