



The Influence of Chronic Pain on Social Care Service Use in the UK

RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Context: Adult social care need is increasing, posing a challenge to public and societal resources. Musculoskeletal disease and chronic pain are also increasing in prevalence, and given their disabling nature, may be contributing to social care demands. However, we do not know what proportion of adults with chronic musculoskeletal pain use social care services.

Objective: To describe social care use in adults with chronic pain.

Methods: An online cross-sectional survey was sent to participants of a previous mobile health study investigating people with chronic pain. It collected data on care received in the last month, including providers, frequency and duration of care, demographics and medical diagnoses. Descriptive statistics summarised these data, and a multivariable logistic regression model identified factors associated with care receipt.

Findings: There were 981 respondents, 95% identified MSK disease as the cause of their pain. Five hundred twenty-seven (54%) reported receiving social care services in the last month, with the majority (338, 74%) receiving this care informally from family and friends. From multivariate analyses, those receiving care were more likely to have a diagnosis of osteoarthritis or fibromyalgia.

Limitations: The sample may not be fully representative of the chronic MSK pain population.

Implications: Adults with chronic MSK pain have significant social care use, predominantly informal. Understanding the relationship between MSK diseases and social care may allow better design of social care services in this context, as well as opportunities to develop prevention strategies. Future research should focus on identifying whether these findings are replicated in a more representative sample of people with MSK disease.

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