

PainWeek®

A Turning Wind: **Women, Pain, and Achieving Health Equity**

Monica Mallampalli, PhD
Senior Scientific Advisor

healthywomen

Disclosure

I have no financial disclosure or conflicts of interest regarding the information in this presentation

Learning Objectives

healthywomen

- Explain the impact of sex and gender differences in chronic pain with a focus on women's health
- Recognize challenges unique to women living with chronic pain
- Discuss potential solutions to overcome disparities to care in order to achieve health equity

Mission & Values

healthywomen

MISSION Educate women ages 35 to 64 to make informed health choices.

VALUES **Trusted Partner:** We educate and engage women by providing them with scientifically-reviewed, evidence-based information that allows them to make informed health choices to live well and age well.

Independent Voice: Our reputational value to our stakeholders is in serving as the leading source of women's health information, which we execute on through transparency in all relationships and collaborations.

Digital Excellence: Every day, we work to serve women by providing access to timely, inspiring and enduring online content.

Thought Leadership: Our ability to grow, innovate and shape the future of women's health is in our ability to identify and set the agenda around topics before they become critical and to share our knowledge with stakeholders.

Our Reach

healthywomen

For more than 30 years, HealthyWomen.org has remained true to its founding mission. From the start, we've been committed to creating and broadly disseminating evidence-based and clinically sound health resources tailored for the unique, and often overlooked, health experiences of women aged 35 to 64.

~1.5K
unique monthly
visitors to
HealthyWomen.org

~64K
subscribers to
bi-weekly consumer
e-newsletters

~28K
Facebook likes

~17K
Twitter followers

HealthyWomen.org Works Collaboratively to Help More Women Achieve Healthier Lives By...



Identifying the critical issues facing women through research and unique insight from consumers, advocacy groups, and hcps

Creating tangible and unbiased educational materials and optimizing diverse media platforms to bolster awareness of health information among women, caregivers, hcps and decision-makers

Driving consensus on policies to improve the lives of women and their families

Leveraging partnerships and alliances to highlight women's health needs and identify actionable solutions and programming goals

Engaging a strong national partner network to disseminate health information, foster dialogue and cultivate change

Areas of Focus

Education & Awareness

We provide scientifically reviewed, evidence-based information that allows women to take a proactive role in their health and the health of their families.

Science & Innovation

We convene information exchanges that aim to advance and elevate conversations around unmet needs in women's health — and inform our areas of focus.

Policy & Advocacy

We support and promote policy issues that are of importance to women's health with a focus on access, affordability, safety and the inclusion of women in science and research.

healthywomen





Female Forward Together: End Period Stigma

Our goal with this program is to elevate the conversation around women's health and overcome the period stigma that too many women experience.

PROGRAMS



Chronic Pain for Women Is Real

Chronic pain affects an estimated 100 million Americans, more than the total number who have been diagnosed with diabetes, cancer and heart disease combined.

CREATED WITH SUPPORT



Female CEOs Unite to Fight Menstrual Stigma

As female CEOs, we are committed to fighting stigma and overcoming the bias and stigma around menstruation that keeps too many women in the shadows.

PROGRAMS



Aging Smart, Aging Well: How Women Make Decisions About Their Health in the 21st Century

Created by HealthyWomen and WebMD, Aging Smart, Aging Well is a new nationwide initiative spotlighting the health information needs and concerns of women ages 40 and older.



Webinar: The Presidency, Congress and the Supreme Court: 2020 Election and Women's Health

A discussion on "The Presidency, Congress and the Supreme Court: 2020 Election and Women's Health."

PROGRAMS



Female Forward Together: End Period Stigma

Our goal with this program is to elevate the conversation around women's health and overcome the period stigma that too many women experience.

PROGRAMS



Webinar: Women's Health Behaviors and Decision-Making During and After COVID-19

HealthyWomen hosted a survey results discussion on "Emotional and Physical Health Behaviors and Health Care Decision-Making During and After COVID-19."

PROGRAMS



LIVE with HealthyWomen: Webinar Series

HealthyWomen is hosting a series of webinars convening experts and advocates in women's health together in live conversations to address concerns experienced and anticipated in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

PROGRAMS



No Pause in Menopause Roundtable

Watch a series of webinars discussing menopause.

PROGRAMS



2020 HealthyWomen Annual Event

Our virtual event celebrating innovation, evolution and revelations in women's health.

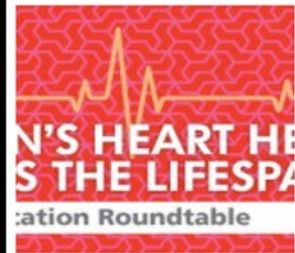
PROGRAMS



Women and Opioids: The Unseen Impact

A national joint education campaign launched by HealthyWomen & Healthline to promote visibility and awareness of opioid use disorder, especially its impact on women and their families and communities.

Campaigns & Events



Women's Heart Health Across the Lifespan: A Health Education Roundtable

This event will bring together health experts and patient advocates as they discuss key heart health topics at various life stages.

PROGRAMS



HealthyWomen, along with its partners, Prevention Magazine and GCI Health, Host Outsmart Stress Panel

As part of the #BeHealthiHer movement, Healthywomen, along with its partners, Prevention and health care communications agency GCI Health, conducted a nationwide survey about women and stress

PROGRAMS



HealthyWomen Convenes Experts to Discuss Biosimilars & Related Topics

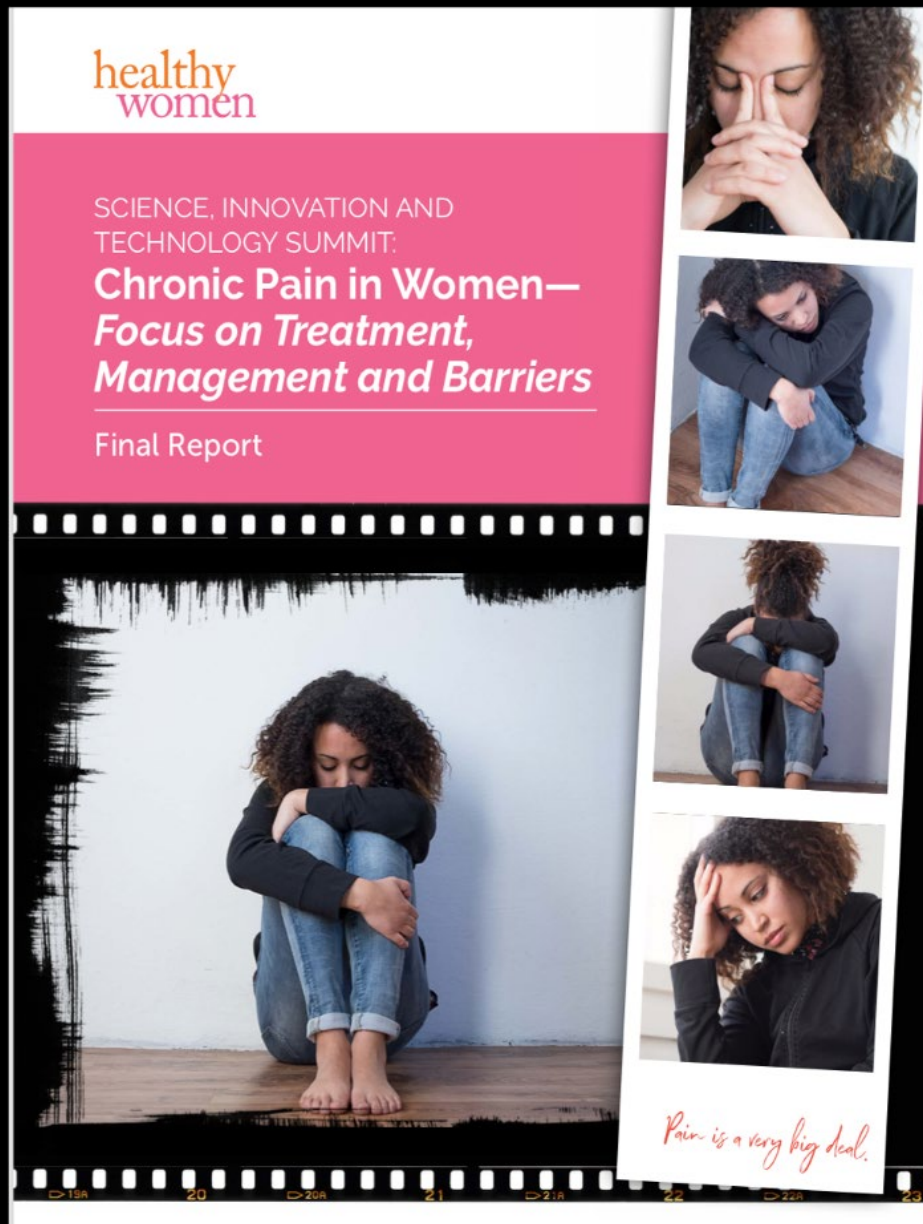
On October 25, 2019, HealthyWomen convened a day-long forum in Washington, DC, to examine the role of biosimilars in women's health. Experts offered many insights on biosimilars and related topics.

PROGRAMS



HealthyWomen Chronic Pain Summit Presentations

PROGRAMS



A Unique Summit Focused Solely on Chronic Pain in Women


- Elevate current dialogue on effectively treating and managing chronic pain in women
- Identify knowledge gaps and challenges
- Address the numerous disparities, sex differences and stigma associated with chronic pain in women.

Full Report
Video Presentations
Relevant Content



Chronic Pain Content

healthywomen



HOME | YOUR HEALTH

In a World of Pain


For the first time, award-winning actor Marin Hinkle discusses the chronic pain she's lived with for five years.

By Michele Wojciechowski | 20 Jul 2020

YOUR HEALTH

CHRONIC PAIN

[f](#) [t](#) [p](#) [in](#) [e](#)



HOME | REAL WOMEN, REAL STORIES

Chronic Pain Drove Me to Despair, but Cancer Taught Me to Heal


After 38 years living with pain, I've become passionate about the pain-cancer connection.

By Cynthia Toussaint | 16 Dec 2020


REAL WOMEN, REAL STORIES

CHRONIC PAIN

[f](#) [t](#) [p](#) [in](#) [e](#)




Chronic Care Issues

 Jackie Rochelau


Living with Chronic Overlapping Pain Conditions

Millions of Americans live with multiple chronic overlapping pain conditions — and most of them are women

14 October




Chronic Care Issues

 Deb Gordon


Managing Chronic Pain in Rural America

You don't need to suffer alone

09 November



Chronic Care Issues

 Shannon Shelton Miller

Suffering From Chronic Pain as a Black Woman

Bias can lead to disparities in diagnosis and treatment of Black women with chronic pain

30 September

Real Women Real Stories

healthywomen



Navigating Injury and Pain During the COVID-19 Shutdown

I didn't realize how reliant I was on medical providers until they became unreachable, sheltering in their homes like the rest of us.

29 April 2020



Dealing With Migraines Is More Art Than Science

This is one woman's journey coping with chronic migraine headaches.

21 May 2020



How I Found New Relief With Migraine Disease

I was plagued with migraine disease for decades and finally found relief with a new doctor, new diagnosis, new medication, and a new career.

06 August 2020



Managing Chronic Pain Is a Mind-Body-Spirit Endeavor

Living with pain for 23 years, I've learned that supporting others is essential to my health.

27 August 2020

The Only Way Out Is Through: How I Healed From the Trauma of Chronic Pain

After years of fighting my pain, I learned posttraumatic growth starts when you're in the midst of struggle.

22 September 2020

I've Lived With Chronic Migraine Since Childhood

I lost my identity through my struggles and felt I had no purpose in life, but I turned my misery and suffering into a positive.

09 June 2020

Op-Eds



A Call to Action for Helping Women in Chronic Pain

HealthyWomen's Dr. Monica Mallampalli shares some unsettling data—across sex, gender, and race—and offers measures for moving women's healthcare forward.

By Monica Mallampalli, PhD, MSc

Monica Mallampalli, PhD, MSc, serves as the scientific advisor for scientific and strategic initiatives at *HealthyWomen*, a nonprofit aimed at raising awareness and advocacy around issues important to women's health. Here, she issues a call to action that builds on the organization's 2019 report, *Chronic Pain in Women—Focus on Treatment, Management and Barriers*, which was based on a survey of 1,004 women living with chronic pain.¹

With updated data and specific recommendations on how to get the job done, Dr. Mallampalli is asking that access to care for all women with chronic pain conditions be addressed and improved—an especially crucial issue during COVID-19 and as part of the country's impassioned conversation on race and privilege.



Why Women Need a Personalized Approach to Chronic Pain Management

Women are more likely to have chronic pain but less likely to get the medical care they need.

By HealthyWomen Editors | 28 Jun 2019

CHRONIC CARE ISSUES

CHRONIC PAIN



ARTICLES • FEATURED ARTICLES

It's Not In Her Head

By Monica Mallampalli, PhD, HealthyWomen

Cynthia Toussaint spent 13 ½ years with burning pain spreading through her body, initiated from a torn hamstring during ballet class.



Why Clinical Trials Need to Emphasize Function Over Pain Measurement

Rather than pain reduction, the ability to lead a quality life should be prioritized

By Monica Mallampalli, HealthyWomen's Senior Advisor, Scientific And Strategic Initiatives
| 14 Jan 2021

POLICY

CLINICAL TRIALS



FDA needs better data to treat women and chronic pain

BY MONICA MALLAMPALLI AND MARTHA NOLAN, OPINION CONTRIBUTORS — 04/12/21 05:00 PM EDT
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

32 COMMENTS

69 SHARES



Just in

Just in

Science and Policy

June 15, 2020

HealthyWomen's Letter to the FDA and NIH on Chronic Pain Treatment Options

HealthyWomen led a group effort of 33 organizations to send a letter urging the FDA and NIH to make new, non-addictive pain treatments a research priority.

September 8, 2020

RE: HealthyWomen's comments to inform Office of Women's Health Strategic Priorities; Establishment of a Public Docket; Request for Comments

We thank you for the opportunity to provide input and comments to help inform the strategic priorities of the Office of Women's Health (OWH) (**Docket No. FDA-2020-N-1391**) at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). We commend the FDA for seeking input on the scientific, educational and outreach priorities of the Agency and ensuring that important health concerns for women are addressed.



Advisory Council Women and Pain

healthywomen



***Collectively we will serve as an
authority on the issues of women
and chronic pain***

VISION:

Empower women to make decisions to optimize pain management and function.

MISSION:

We will educate stakeholders to improve women's pain health recognizing the importance of sex, gender and cultural differences in pain.



HOME | CREATED WITH SUPPORT

Fast Facts: 10 Things to Know About Women and Chronic Pain

Why women suffer more from chronic pain

By Deb Gordon | 24 Mar 2021

CREATED WITH SUPPORT

CHRONIC PAIN

[!\[\]\(31dc830bf8206b94b5a585ce61ce9013_img.jpg\)](#)[!\[\]\(92fe6ec8c8b0011d3746d04c5962f469_img.jpg\)](#)[!\[\]\(331831374f10e8c7fe483c7fa2c6e388_img.jpg\)](#)[!\[\]\(59a6d1a83fdb24579739802677391c72_img.jpg\)](#)[!\[\]\(f7d0469f5f606ed760feb4851784f3d8_img.jpg\)](#)

Learning Objective 1

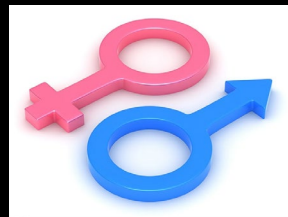
Learn about the impact of sex and gender differences in chronic pain with a focus on women's health.

Sex and Gender Differences

healthywomen

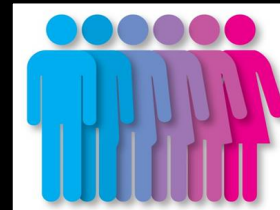
Sex Differences

Biological and physiological differences between women and men, with sex chromosomes and gonadal hormones primarily contributing to differences at the cellular, organ and systems level.



Gender Differences

A combination of environmental, social, and cultural influences on the biological factors in both sexes



Health Disparity and Equity

healthywomen

Health Disparity

Differences in health outcomes and their causes among groups of people.

Health Equity

When everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible

SOURCE: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

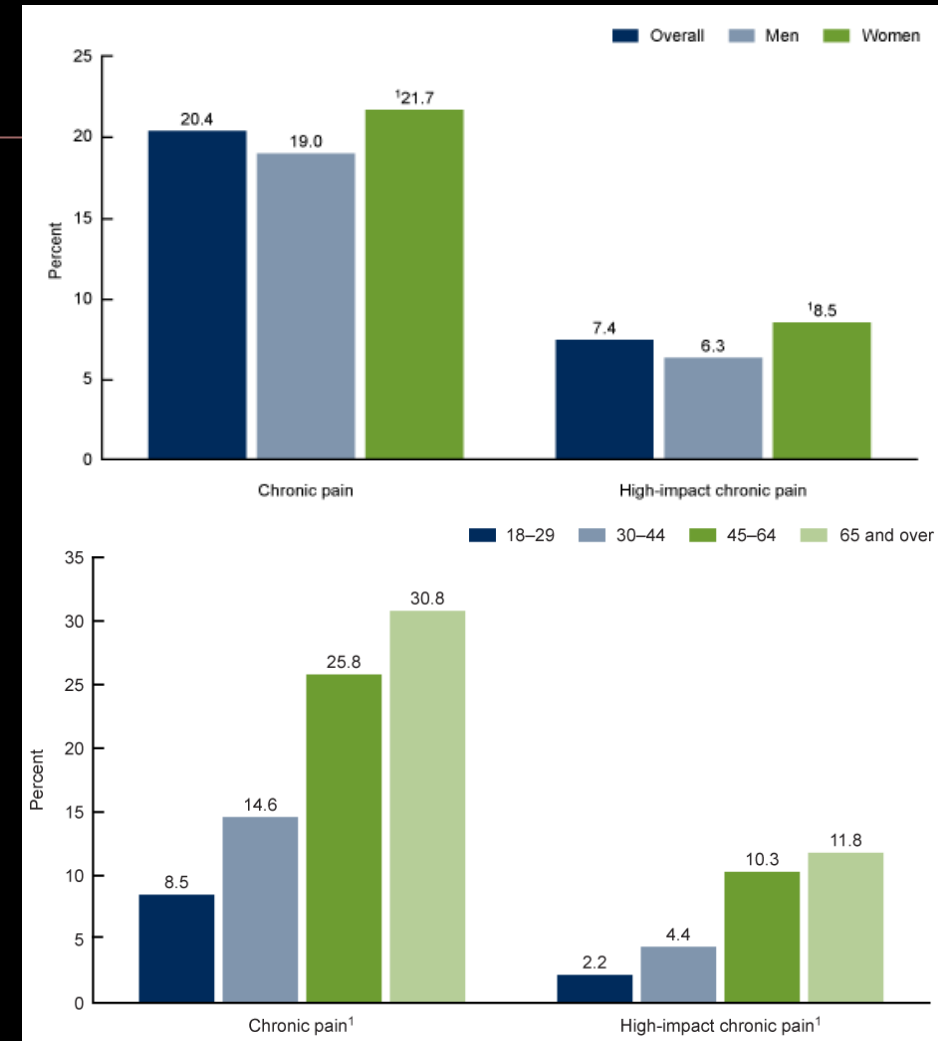
Chronic Pain Impacts Women More than Men

50 million in the U.S. suffer from chronic pain

Estimated **1:4** women impacted by chronic pain

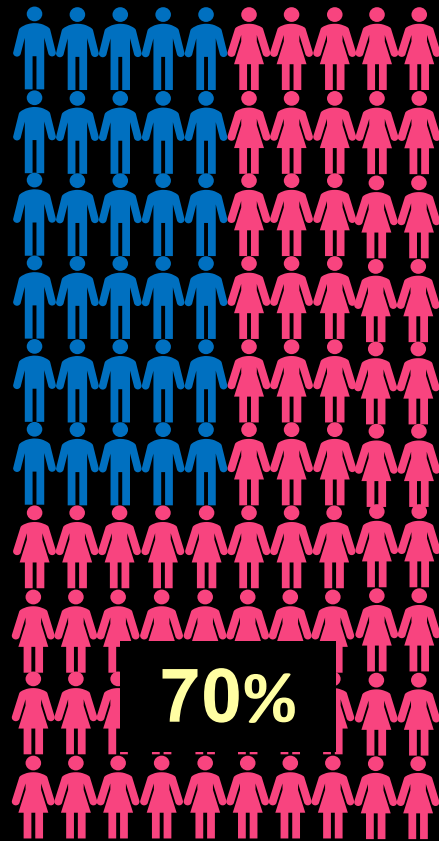
Dahlhamer J, et al. MMWR. 2018

healthywomen



Zelaya CE, et. al. National Center for Health Statistics. 2020.

Painful Disorders Prevalent in Women



Female Prevalence

migraine headache with aura
chronic tension headache
post-dural puncture headache
hemicrania continua
cervicogenic headache
tic douloureux
temporomandibular joint disorder
occipital neuralgia
periapical periodontitis & abscess
atypical odontalgia
burning tongue
carotidynia
chronic paroxysmal hemicrania
temporal arteritis
carpal tunnel syndrome
Raynaud's disease
chilblains
causalgia
reflex sympathetic dystrophy
hemicrania continua
chronic venous insufficiency
fibromyalgia syndrome
esophagitis
reflux esophagitis with peptic ulcer
slipping rib syndrome
twelfth rib syndrome
gallbladder disease
post-cholecystectomy syndrome
irritable bowel syndrome
interstitial cystitis
acute intermittent porphyria
proctalgia fugax
chronic constipation
pyriformis syndrome
peroneal muscular atrophy
multiple sclerosis
rheumatoid arthritis
pain of psychological origin

Male Prevalence

migraine without aura
cluster headache
post traumatic headache
SUNCT syndrome
Raeder's paratrigeminal syndrome
Pancoast tumor
thromboangiitis obliterans
brachial plexus avulsion
pancreatic disease
duodenal ulcer
abdominal migraine
lateral femoral cutaneous neuropathy
post herpetic neuralgia
hemophilic arthropathy
ankylosing spondylitis

No Sex Prevalence

acute tension headache
cluster-tic syndrome
"jabs" and "jolts" syndrome
secondary trigeminal neuralgia
neuralgia of nervus intermedius
painful ophthalmoplegia
maxillary sinusitis
toothache due to dentin/enamel defects
toothache due to pulpitis
cracked tooth syndrome
dry socket
vagus nerve neuralgia
stylohyoid process syndrome
thoracic outlet syndrome
brachial plexus tumors
esophageal motility disorders
chronic gastric ulcer
Crohn's disease
diverticular disease of colon
carcinoma of the colon
familial Mediterranean fever
hereditary coproporphria
acute herpes zoster
burns

Age Dependent Sex Differences

Female Prevalence	Male Prevalence
gout (after age 60)	gout (before age 60)
osteoarthritis (after age 45)	osteoarthritis (before age 45)
livedo reticularis (after age 40)	coronary artery disease (before age 65)
	erythromelalgia (over age 50)

Sex and Gender Differences Exist in Pain

Women experience recurrent pain, severe pain, more frequent pain, and longer-lasting pain in the context of numerous conditions

Fillingim, RB. J Pain. 2009

Women have lower pain thresholds and experience greater pain intensity in many chronic pain conditions

Bartley EJ, and Fillingim, RB. Br J Anaesth. 2013

Women, compared to men, received less and less effective pain relief, less pain medication with opioids, and more antidepressants and got more mental health referrals

Samulowitz A. Pain Res Manag. 2018

Females lacking T cells switch to pain response pathway observed in males

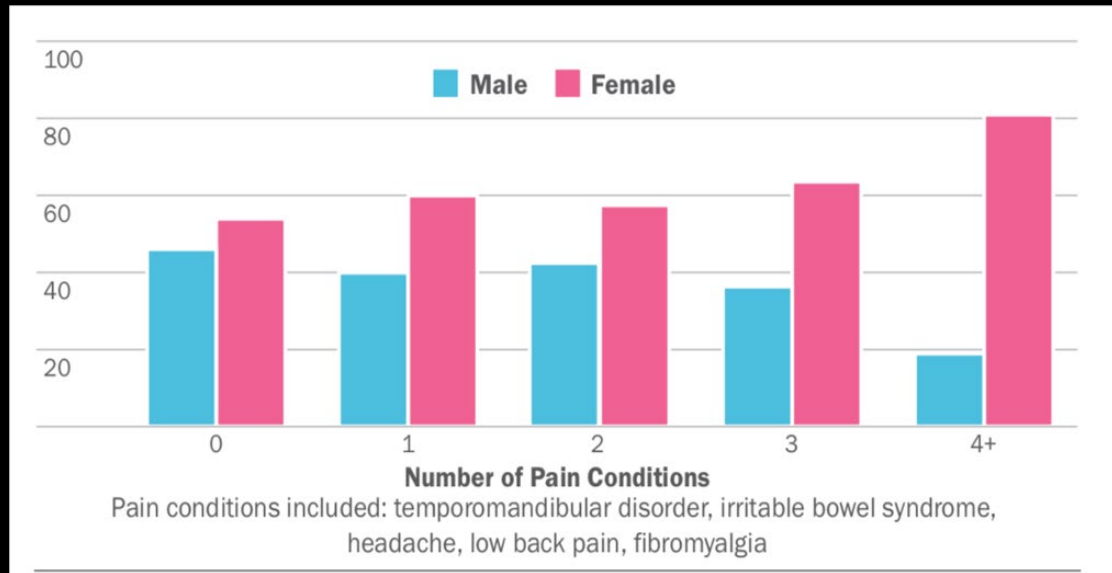
Sorge RE. NatNeurosci 2015

Sex Differences in Pain Management

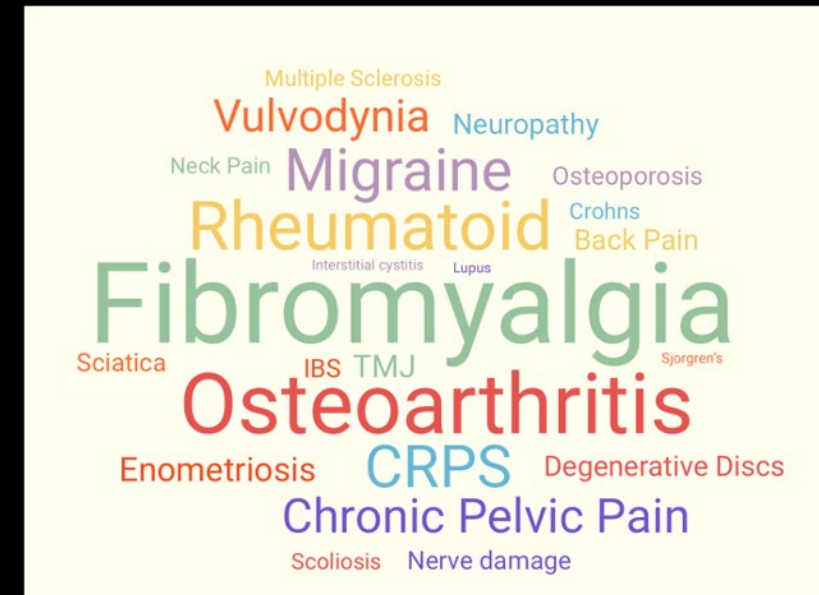
“Central to the unique issues women face in pain management are the differences between men and women with respect to pain sensitivity, response to pain medication, and predisposition to clinical pain conditions.”

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2019, May). Pain Management Best Practices Inter-Agency Task Force Report: Updates, Gaps, Inconsistencies, and Recommendations.

Greater and Higher Risk of Pain Conditions in Women



Maixner W, Fillingim RB, et al. J Pain. 2016



HealthyWomen Survey
May 23-June 18, 2019
1004 respondents

Chronic Pain and Depression Connection

35-45%

Chronic pain patients experience depression

75%

Patients with depression also report pain

Understanding their precise relationship can predict better response to chronic pain treatment and management for patients.

Depression and Anxiety Prevalent in Chronic Pain Conditions

healthywomen

Chronic Pain Conditions	F:M (Prevalence)	Depression (%)	Anxiety (%)
• Spinal/Low back pain	1.2:1	2-56	1-26
• Neuropathic pain	1.07:1	4-12	5-27
• Fibromyalgia	2:1	21-83	18-60
• Migraine headache	2:1	17-28	2-45
• Temporomandibular joint disorder	2:1	16-65	15-65
• Pelvic pain	1:0	19-22	12-41
• Abdominal pain	1.4:1	9-54	21-51
• Arthritis	1.3:1	3-39	1-35

Hooten WM. Mayo Clinic Proceedings. 2016

Chronic Pain and Sleep Connection

Sleep deficiency and chronic pain are highly co-morbid

Haack M, Neuropsychopharmacology. 2020

Chronic pain patients have less sleep time, take longer to get to sleep and spend more time awake

Mathias JL et al. Sleep Medicine, 2018

50% Insomnia patients suffer from chronic pain

Finan PH et al., J Pain. 2013

Sleep disorders were diagnosed in women with chronic pain (65%) compared to men (35%)

Mathias JL et al. Sleep Medicine, 2018

Sleep loss increases pain sensitivity & is a major risk factor for developing chronic pain, especially in women

Krause AJ et. al., J Neurosci. 2019
Staffe AT, PLOS ONE, 2019

Sleep complaints are present in 67-88% chronic pain disorders

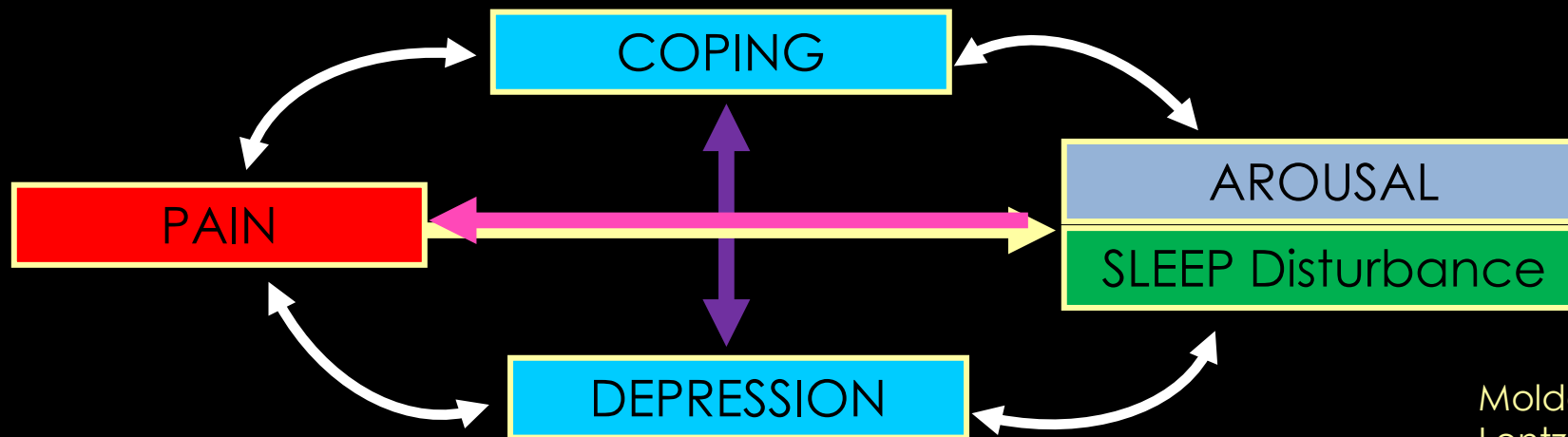
Finan PH et al., J Pain. 2013

Chronic Pain, Sleep and Depression are Connected

Traditional Linear View



Reciprocal View: Moldofsky's Paradigm Shift



Moldofsky H et al. Psychosom Med. 1975
 Lentz MJ, et al. J Rheumatol. 1999
 Roehrs T, et al. Sleep. 2006
 Kundermann B et al. Pain Res Manag. 2004
 Haack M and Mullington JM, Pain. 2005

Learning Objective 2

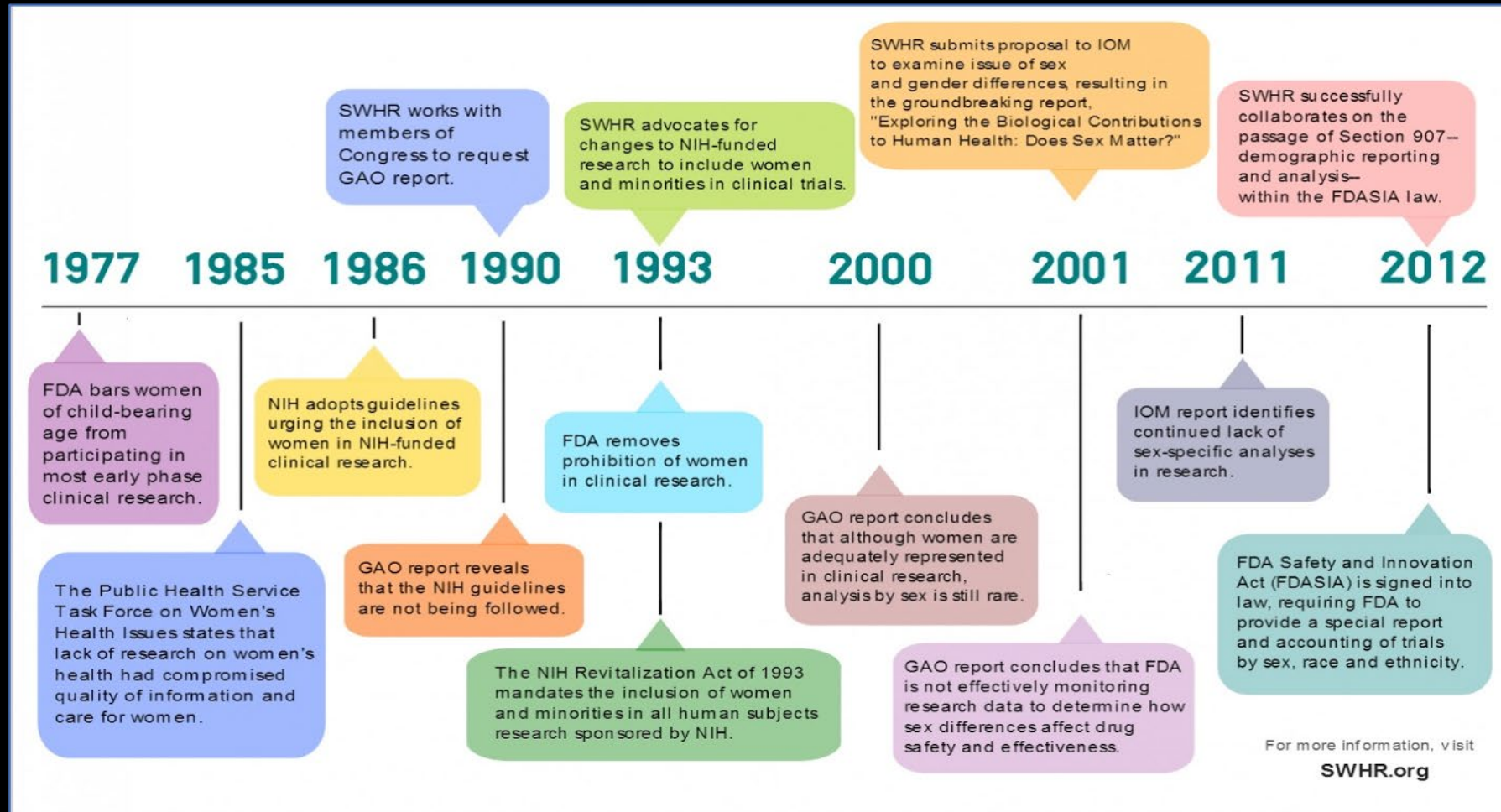
Explore the barriers and challenges unique to women living with chronic pain.



Courtesy, Etta Hulme Papers, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries

<https://libraries.uta.edu/ettahulme/image/20109831>

History of Women's Health Research



Treating Pain in Women is Complicated

Correct diagnosis and access to right treatment takes years

Zhang L, et al. J Pain. 2021

Less likely to be queried about pain at medical appointments

Samulowitz A. Pain Res Manag. 2018

High rates of interpersonal trauma, with PTSD associated with higher pain intensity, greater disability and emotional distress

Åkerblom S, et al. Int J Behav Med. 2017

Multiple pain-related and co-morbid conditions

Maxiner W, et al. J Pain. 2016

Differential response to opioids & nonpharmacological approaches

Pieretti S, et al. Ann Ist Super Sanità. 2016

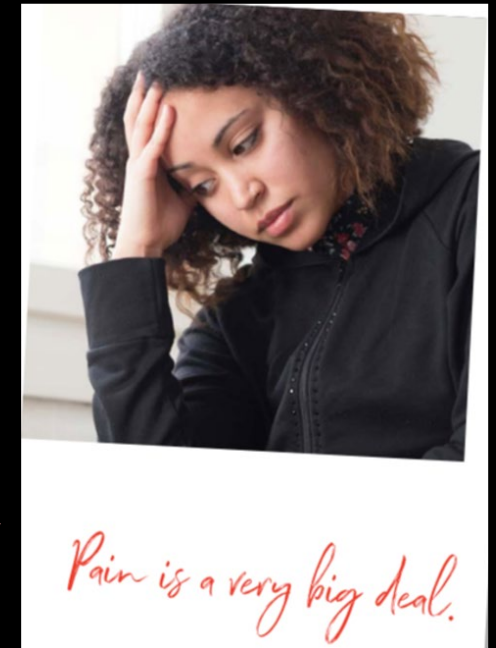
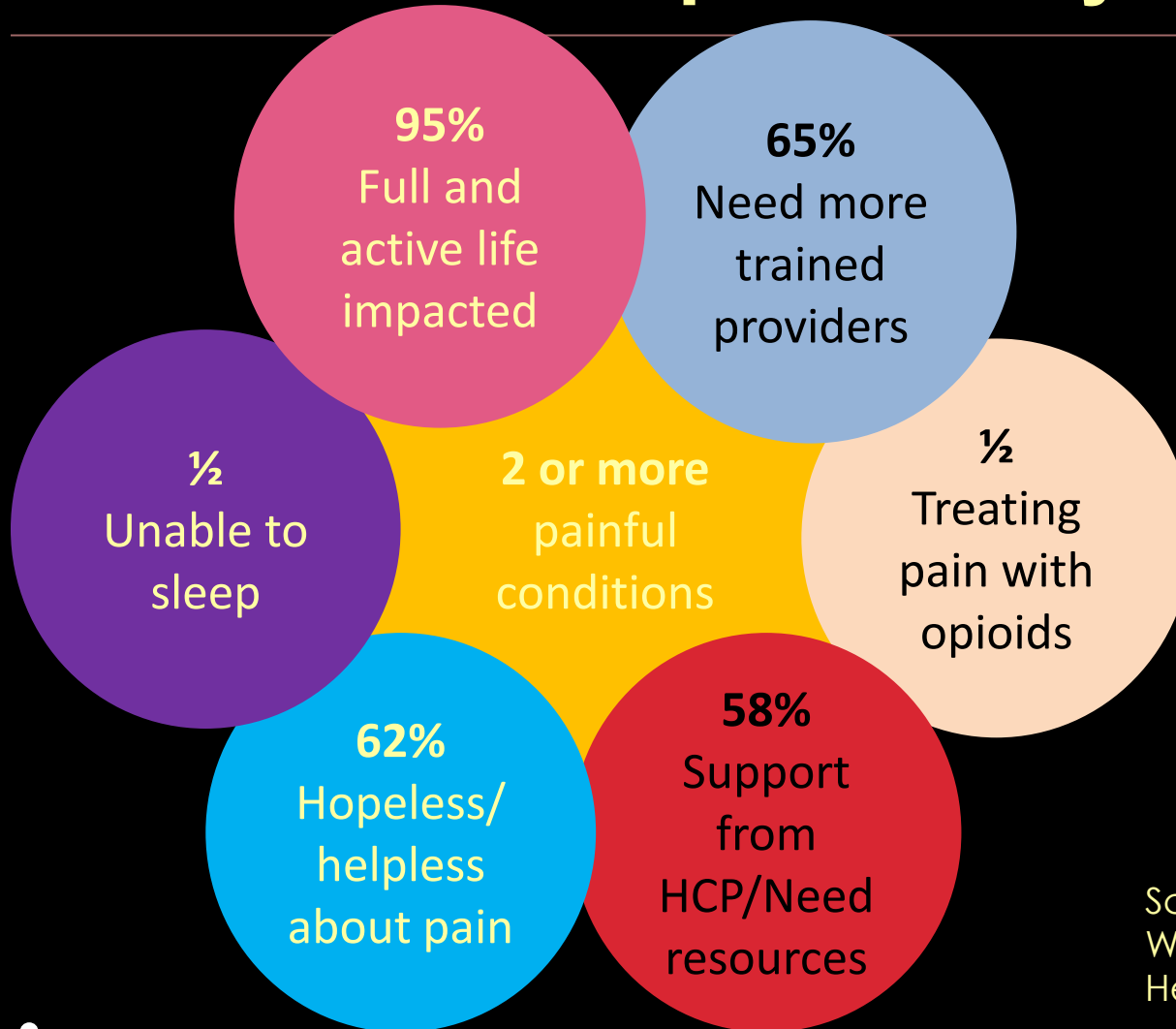
Symptoms severity for several pain conditions vary across the menstrual cycle

Lacovides S, et al. Eur J Pain. 2015

“It’s amazing women get care at all.”

– Mary Driscoll, PhD, Clinical Research Psychologist,
Yale School of Medicine; PRIME Center, VA
Connecticut Healthcare System, VA Women’s Health
Services

Chronic Pain Impacts Daily Lives of Women



HealthyWomen Survey
May 23-June 18, 2019
1004 respondents

Science, Innovation and Technology Summit: Chronic Pain in Women—Focus on Treatment, Management and Barriers. 2020. HealthyWomen.

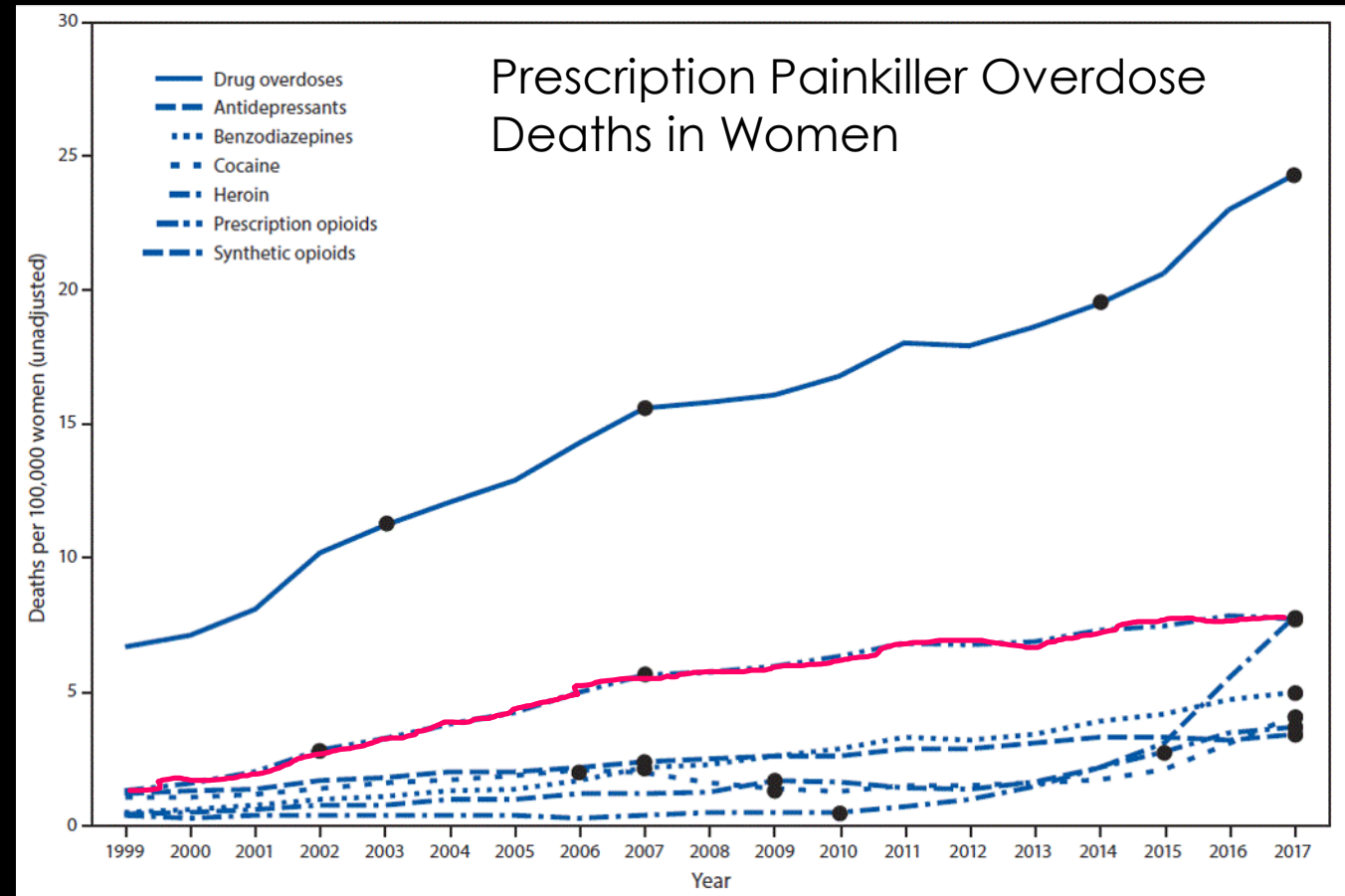
Pain and Opioids

Women are more likely to be prescribed an opioid, at a higher dose for a longer period than men in the setting of chronic pain.

Greenfield SF, et al. Psychiatr Clin North Am. 2010

Between 1999-2015, death rate from opioids increased by 471% among women compared to 218% among men.

White Paper: Opioid Use, Misuse, and Overdose in Women, ORWH, 2017



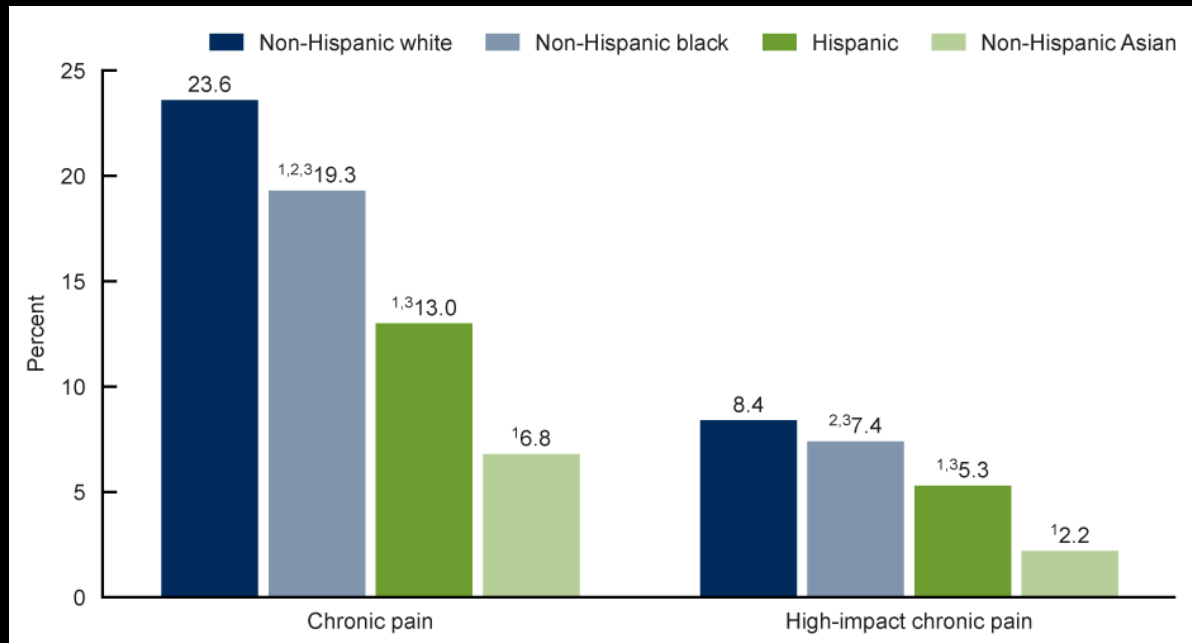
VanHouten JP, et al. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2019;68:1–5.

“The unequal burden and the unheard voices of women, particularly women of color, are, I believe, one of the most pressing needs in pain research.”

– Carmen Green, MD, Professor, Anesthesiology, Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Health Management and Policy, University of Michigan

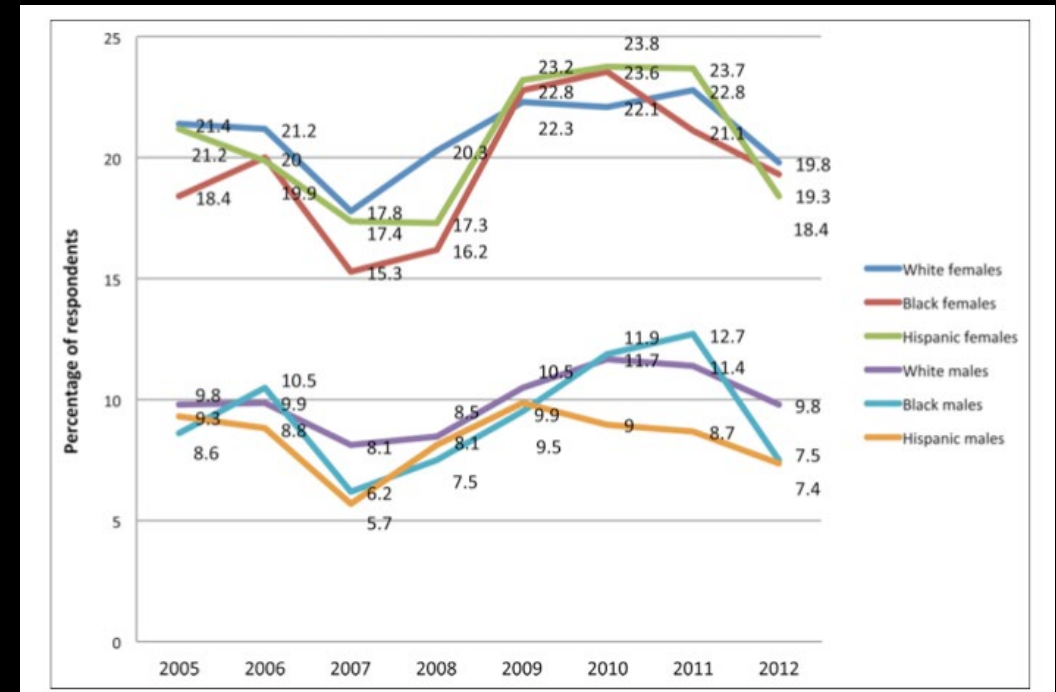
Racial Disparities in the Prevalence of Chronic Pain

healthywomen



Zelaya CE, et. al. National Center for Health Statistics. 2020.

Prevalence of severe headache or migraine in the National Health Interview Survey by sex and race/ethnicity.



Loder S, et. al. Headache. 2015.

Barriers Unique to Women of Color

Physical barriers

Adequate supplies of opioids in low-income white neighborhoods compared to minority high-income neighborhoods.

Physician attitudes

Racial and ethnic stereotyping or implicit/unconscious bias discount pain in minority women who report high levels of pain.

Patient factors

Patients' perceptions of pain can differ among racial and ethnic populations.

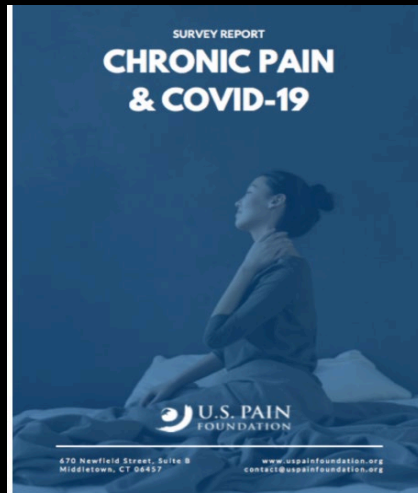
Socioeconomic status, pain reporting, pain behavior and mistrust of medicine can act as barriers.



"It is more important to know what kind of person has a disease than the disease."

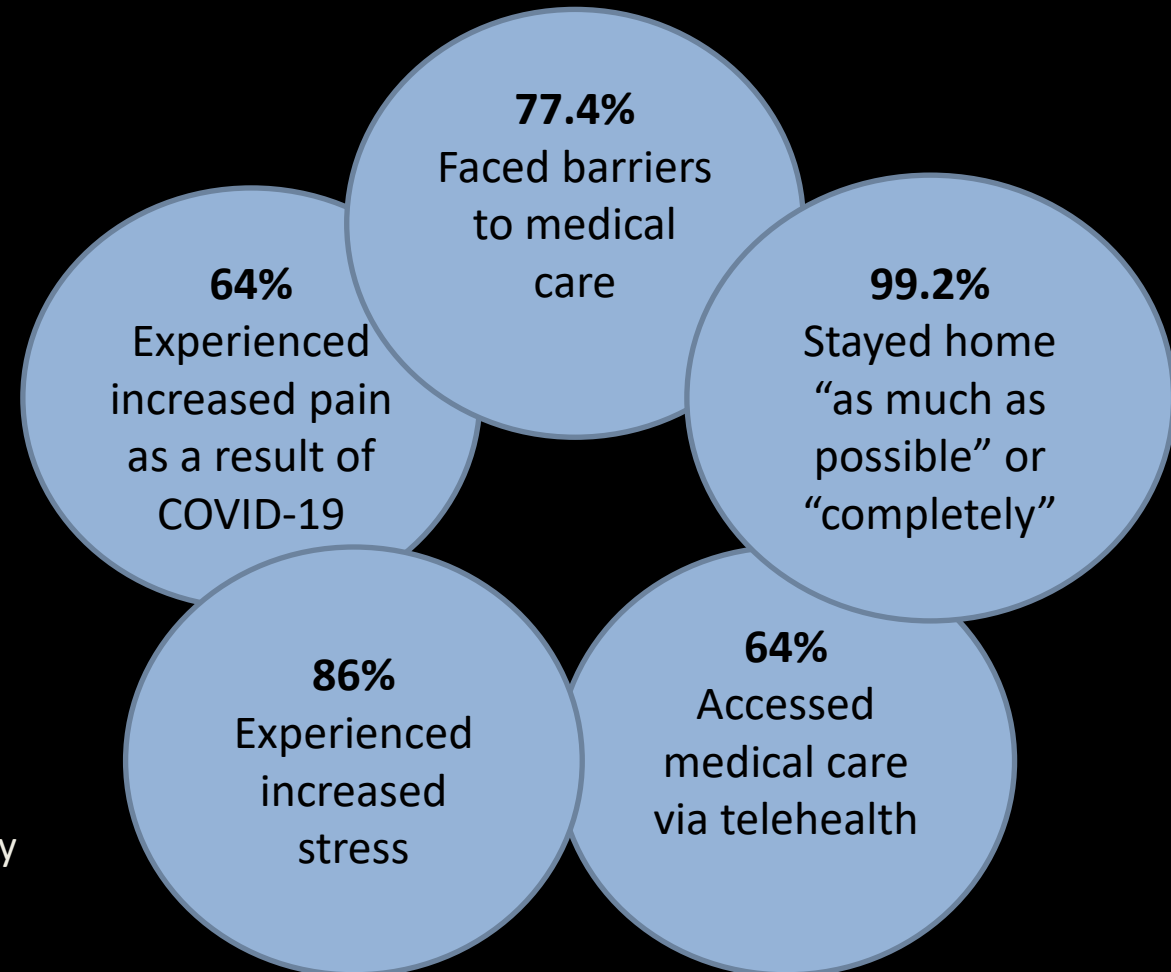
-Sir William Osler

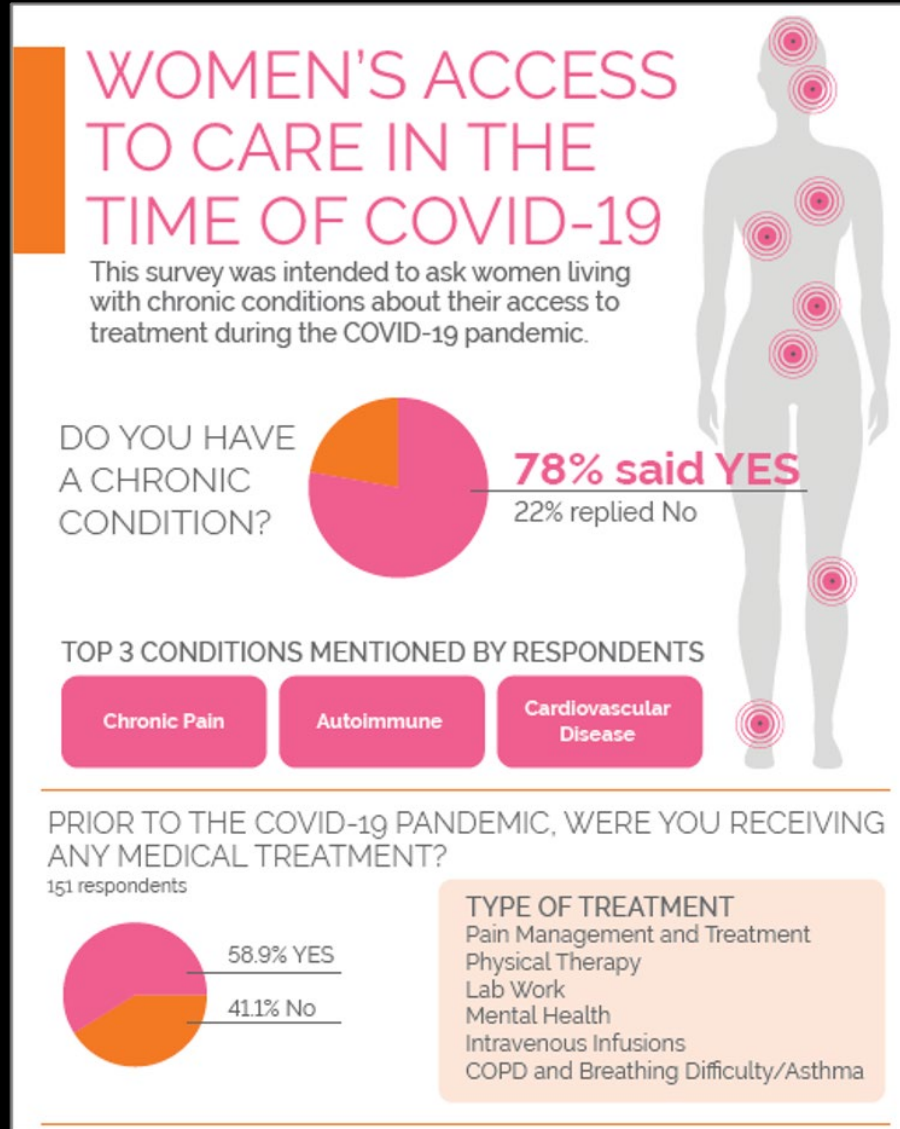
COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Chronic Pain



Back pain, neuropathy, neck pain, osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, headache/migraine disease and autoimmune disease

664 individuals responded to the survey
April 1-8, 2020
50 States

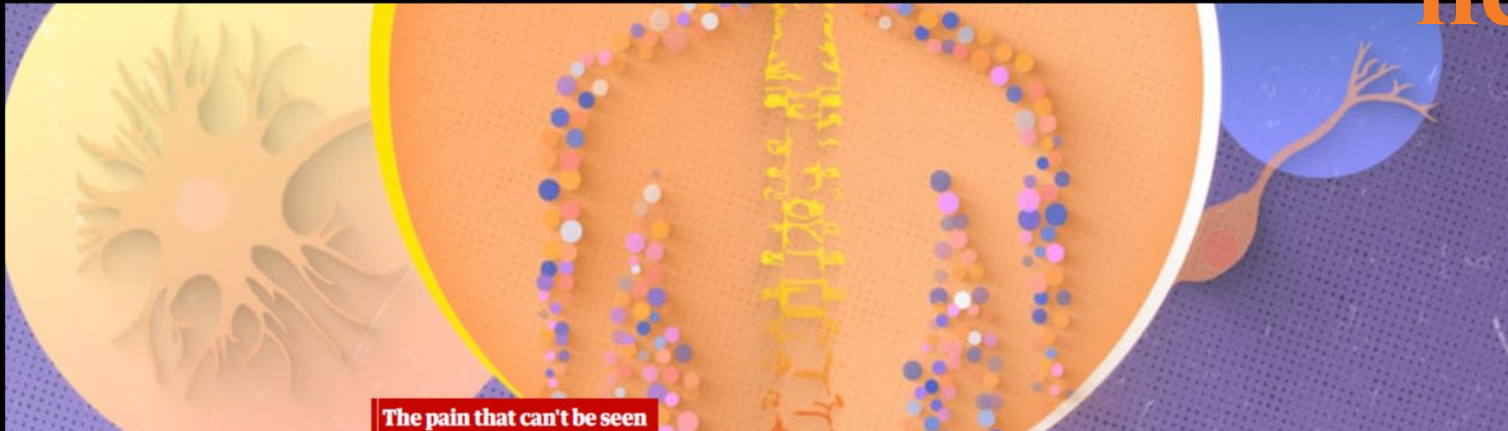




Women Respondents Race/Ethnicity

- 59.9% White
- 18.4% Black/African American
- 13.7% Asian
- 1.3% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 6.4% Multiracial
- 0.3% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Survey conducted from
May 18-June 12, 2020



▲ One of the most common symptoms reported by people with 'long Covid' is musculoskeletal pain.

The pain that can't be seen

Sufferers of chronic pain have long been told it's all in their head. We now know that's wrong

In the first of a series looking at chronic pain and long Covid, Linda Geddes explores the growing realisation that pain can be a disease in and of itself - and the pandemic could be making it worse

- ['Health systems should be prepared': doctors brace for tsunami of long Covid](#)

by [Linda Geddes](#)

It started with headaches and neck pain, but no sooner had Tricia Kalinowski's physiotherapist come up with a strategy to tackle these problems, then another area of her body would start to hurt: her lower back, her hip or her jaw.

Guardian

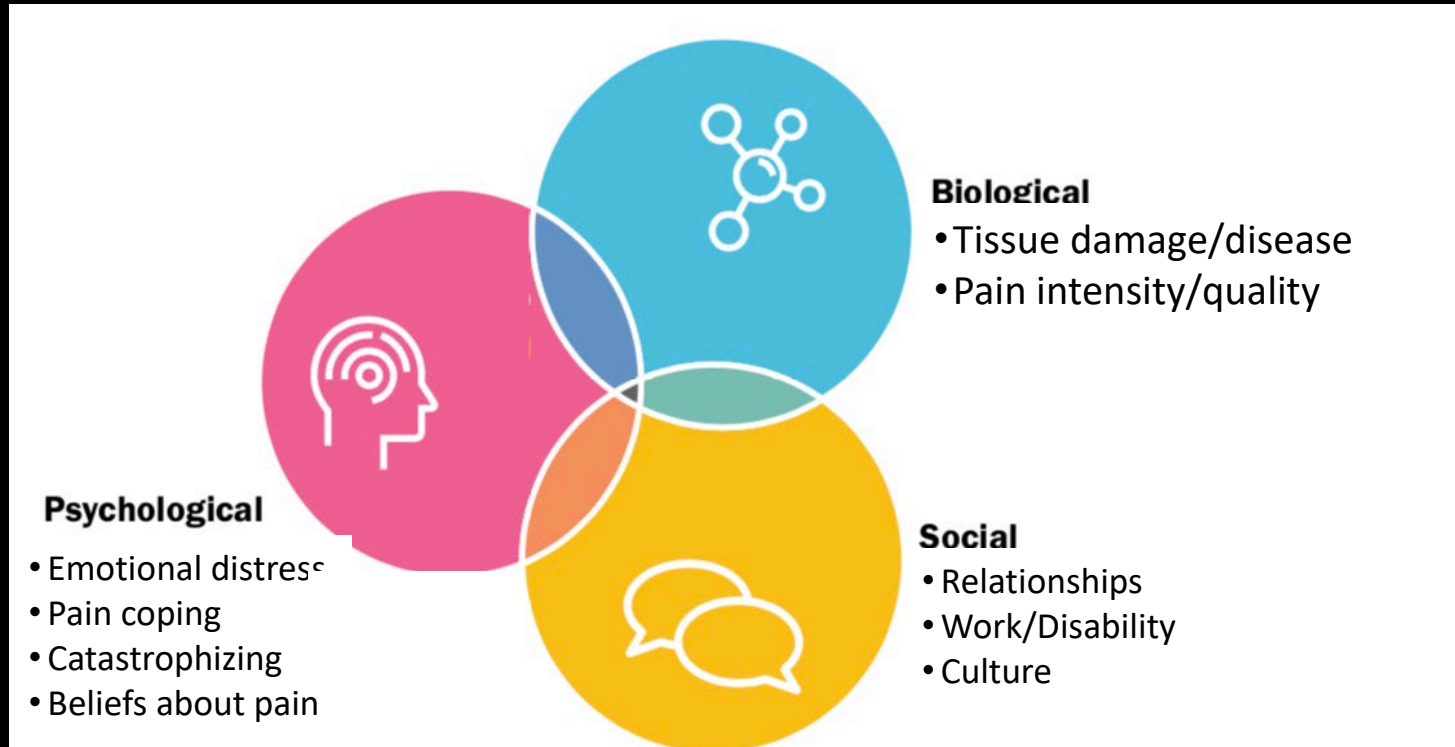
Mon 28 Jun 2021 01:00 EDT

[f](#) [t](#) [e](#)

Learning Objective 3

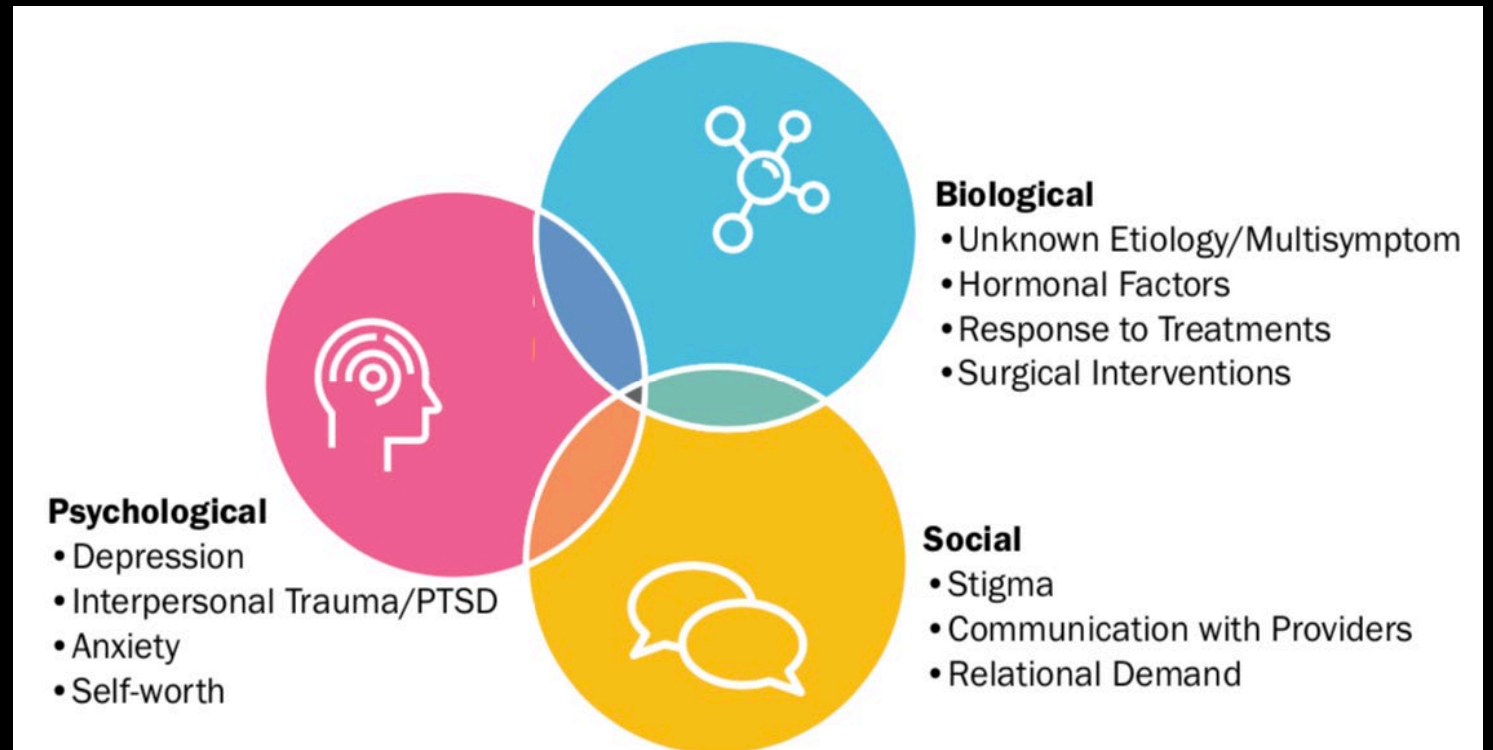
Discuss potential solutions to overcome disparities to care in order to achieve health equity.

Biopsychosocial Model of Pain



Applying the Biopsychosocial Model to Pain Care

Women when seek care have additional factors that deter them from getting optimal care



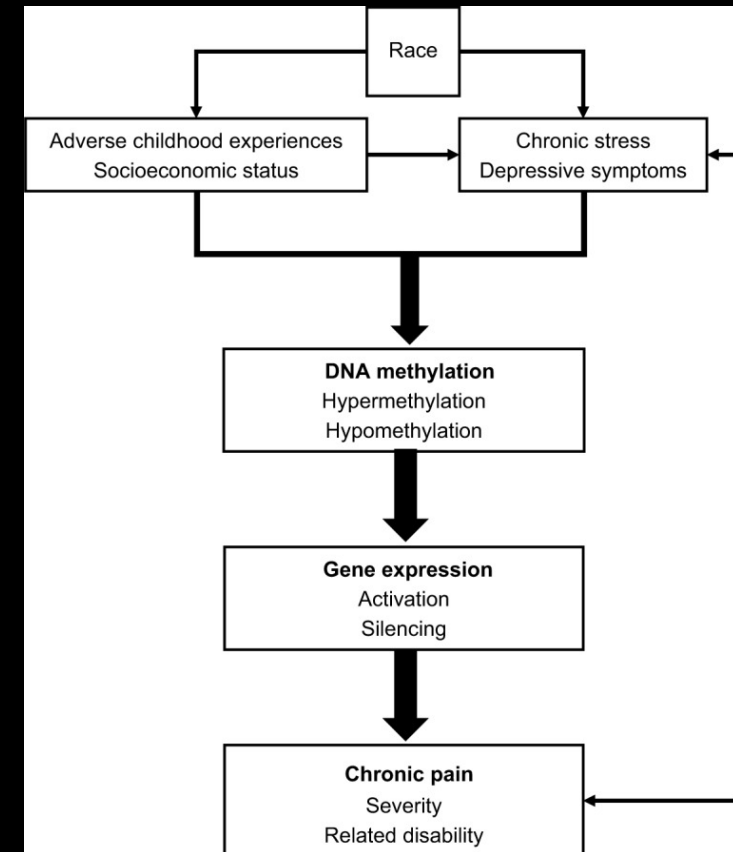
Race-based Traumatic Stress (RBTS)

A conceptual model of the inter-relationship between life experiences, chronic stress, DNA methylation patterns and chronic pain

Racism in Various Forms

Individual racism
Cultural racism
Institutional racism
Ethnoviolence

Could epigenetics explain racial disparities in chronic pain?



Aroke EN, et al. J Pain Res. 2019

Applying the Biopsychosocial Model to Pain Treatment and Management in Women

Two middle-aged women of same age with similar degrees of moderate arthritis with different socio-economic background and support system report similar pain experiences.

TRUE

or

FALSE

healthywomen

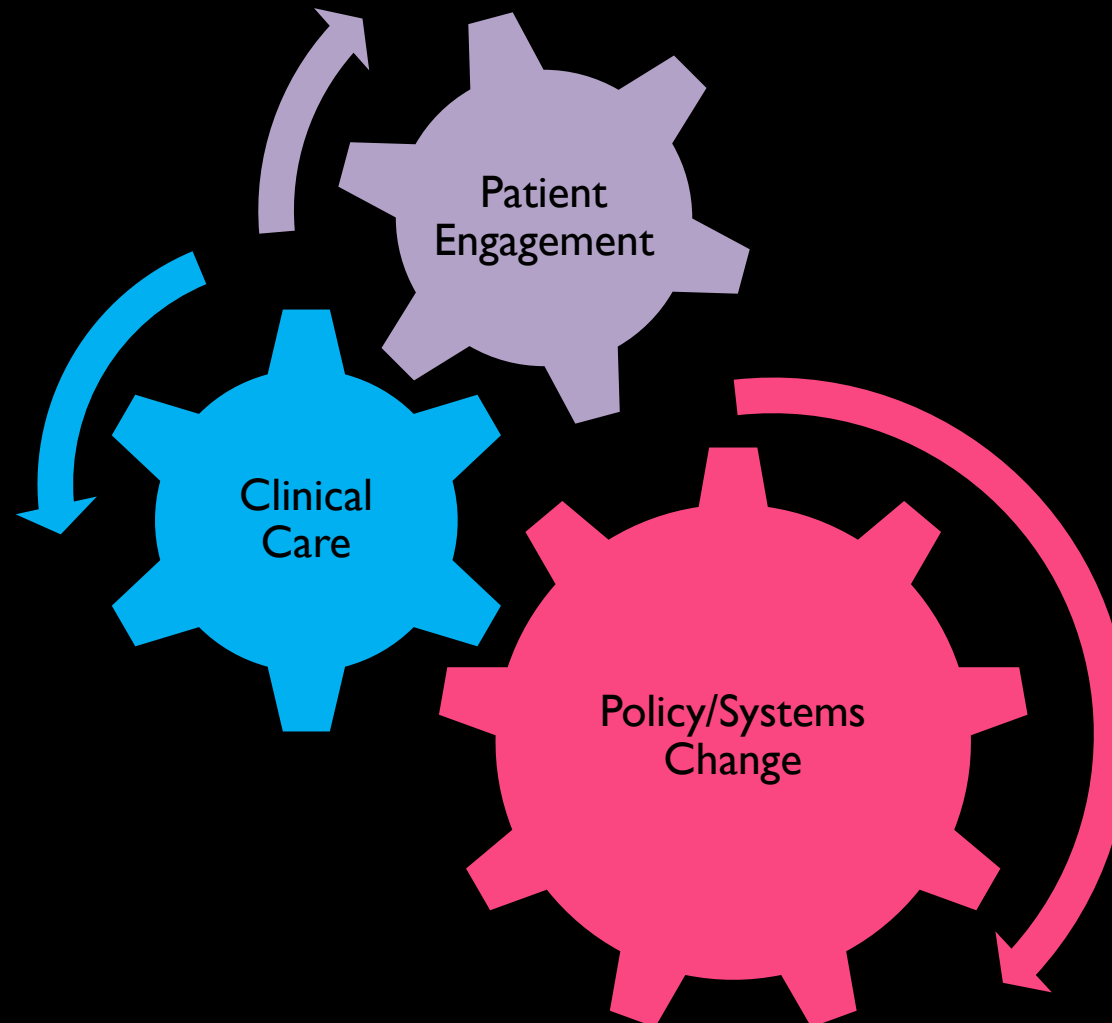
Applying the Biopsychosocial Model to Pain Treatment and Management in Women

Will two middle-aged women of same age with similar degrees of moderate arthritis with different socio-economic background and support system report similar pain experiences?

FALSE

- A healthy 40-year-old woman with strong family support and socioeconomic background with social interests may report only mild pain and limited pain interference.
- On the other hand, another 40-year-old woman who is single with few friends and lower socioeconomic background may report severe pain, substantial functional limitations and depression.
- One domain of the biopsychosocial framework could influence factors in other domains.

Moving Forward to Optimize Care for Women



Clinical Care: What can Providers do?

Can you adopt
biopsychosocial
approach to care?

Can you practice
trauma informed
care?

Will you assess her
mental and sleep
health?

Patient Engagement: What can Women do?

What are 1-2 things
that make your pain
better?

How do you plan to
communicate or
engage with your
providers?

Will you ask you
provider about the
biopsychosocial
approach to care?

Systems Change: What can Policymakers/System Administrators do?

healthywomen

Is there a particular policy/practice that is disadvantageous to women?

How can your organization make pain care more equitable?

Can you identify what biopsychosocial barriers are prominent in your system/hospital?

Learn More About Women and Chronic Pain at HealthyWomen.Org

Chronic Pain

Chronic pain is defined as pain that lasts for **more than 3 months**. High-impact chronic pain is pain that occurs 5 or more days a week for 6 months or more and interferes with your daily living.

Chronic pain affects 50 million Americans a year
High-impact chronic pain affects **20 million** Americans a year — and **11.3 million are women**

Did you know?
1 out of every 3 women lives with chronic pain

Chronic pain is a disease.
And it doesn't just hurt your body.

- It can keep you from living your fullest life
- It can interfere with your sleep
- It can cause you to have feelings of anxiety, depression and hopelessness

Chronic Pain Is Expensive
Chronic pain costs our nation between **\$560 billion and \$635 billion a year** in medical costs, lost productivity and disability programs.

Who does chronic pain affect?
Anyone can get chronic pain — but some groups are **more likely** than others to live with this disease.

- Non-Hispanic white adults
- Women
- People living in poverty or who use public insurance
- Previously employed but not currently employed adults
- Adults 65 and older
- People who live in rural locations

Many people — especially women — with chronic pain have several **overlapping pain conditions**, such as:

- Fibromyalgia
- Interstitial Cystitis
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Osteoarthritis
- Migraine
- Temporomandibular Disorders (TMJ/TMD)
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome/Irritable Bowel Disease

Treating chronic pain is complex.

Chronic pain is a complicated disease, and what works may vary from person to person. In general, the most effective treatment uses a combination of approaches.

- Nonpharmacological Strategies**
neurostimulation, injections
- Medication**
opioids, nonopioids, adjuvant analgesics and biological products
- Psychological Support**
psychotherapy, support groups
- Natural/Holistic Medicine**
massage, meditation/mindfulness, acupuncture
- Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation**
braces, orthotics, electrotherapy
- Lifestyle Changes**
exercise, weight loss, healthy eating

The Biopsychosocial Model

Biological, psychological and social factors play a role in chronic pain. For example, a woman with no history of mental illness (psychological) and a strong support network (social) might find her chronic migraine (biological) more bearable than a woman with a similar condition (biological) who lives with depression (psychological) and feels isolated (social).

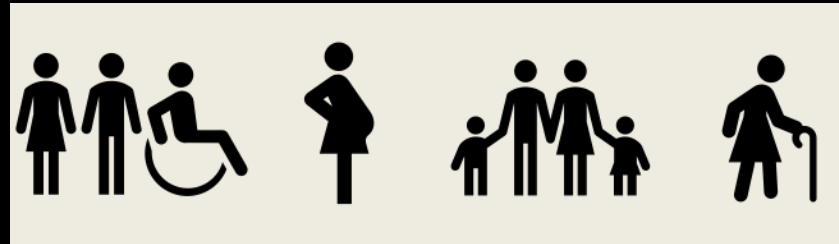
Looking at the **whole picture** and treating a patient from the biopsychological lens can lead to better outcomes in patients.

Survey Says:

HealthyWomen surveyed 1,000 women who live with chronic pain.

- 38%** say they do not have access to enough information about pain
- 65%** feel they would benefit from adequately trained healthcare providers
- 58%** would like more support from their healthcare provider

In working towards achieving health equity in chronic pain health,
what is one thing that you are willing to do?



Acknowledgements

- Martha Nolan, JD, Senior Policy Advisor, HealthyWomen
- HealthyWomen Staff members
- HealthyWomen's Chronic Pain Advisory Council (CPAC)
- Special thanks to CPAC members
 - Mary Driscoll, PhD
 - Smita Patel, MD
 - Cynthia Toussaint
 - Jaimie Sanders
 - Cathy Cartwright

30+ Years of Educating, Engaging
and Inspiring Women to Make
Informed Health Decisions



Thank You

healthywomen

Monica Mallampalli, PhD
Senior Scientific Advisor
monica@healthywomen.org