

CDC Reporting on Chronic Pain Population Health Research

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On Friday, April 14, 2023 CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly* (MMWR) reported on the latest population health data on chronic pain. During 2021, 51.6 million American adults or 20.9% of the population experienced chronic pain (CP) and 17.1 million or 6.9% experienced high-impact CP, defined as CP that limits daily life or work most days or every day in the past 3 months.

These are staggeringly high numbers however the top line data is consistent with data we have been tracking since 2018. What this report does is to go deeper into the data analysis to provide us with a clearer picture of who is affected so we can begin to understand why and gain clues on how to reduce these gargantuan numbers. We know that behind everyone of these 17 million with high-impact CP is a life shattered by the devastation caused by pain.

For instance, the data revealed that the prevalence of high-impact CP was twice as high among Alaskan Native and American Indian adults (12.8%) as White adults (6.5%). Adults living in rural areas with high-impact CP (9.2%) was nearly twice as high as those residing in metropolitan areas (5.5%). And, adults living in poverty (14.4%) experience hi-impact CP at four times the rate of those who do not.

This analysis and reporting was immediately picked up and reported in Stat News and MedPage Today (April 14, 2023) and Fortune, the Washington Post, Yahoo Finance, Healio and the Weather Channel. This MMWR report is most certainly a direct result of our efforts to put pressure on CDC in various ways including annual Appropriations report language directing that this work be analyzed and reported on by CDC. Despite the enormous human and economic impact imposed by chronic pain on our nation, there is no concerted effort within the CDC to ascertain and make publicly available high-quality data on chronic pain.

Collection, analysis and regular reporting of population health research data on CP has been and will continue to be a key priority focus of our federal advocacy efforts at U.S. Pain Foundation and the PAPER Coalition.