



AB210. 18. Attention (mindfulness awareness) and chronic pain

Helen McElligott, James O'Driscoll, Wei Lan, Dominic Harmon

Department of Anaesthesia, Limerick University Hospital, Limerick, Ireland

Background: Attention is one's ability to concentrate on a task and without it our capacity to function is limited. Chronic pain causes attentional deficits, these deficits affect working memory and cognitive ability, therefore affecting ability to perform daily tasks, work, sleep, and cause higher pain ratings. The study aim was to investigate attention using the mindfulness awareness scale in patients attending an Irish chronic pain clinic for the first time.

Methods: The sample consisted of 100 consecutive adult

patients (51 women and 49 men) with chronic pain attending a pain clinic.

Results: Average patient age was 56 years; 52% were female. Back pain was the commonest presentation (50%); 22% of patients reported deficient attention.

Conclusions: Chronic pain causes attentional deficits. Attention training has been reported as beneficial in the treatment of pain (Elomaa 2009). It has been used as a singular treatment and in combination with other pain management strategies (Elomaa 2009). Attention difficulties affects chronic pain patients' outcomes and should be assessed routinely at initial pain clinic assessment.

Keywords: Attention; pain

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