

## AB213. 26. Uncertainty and chronic pain

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**Background:** Medicine is a fallible science. There is an inherently pervasive uncertainty within medicine generally and within pain medicine in particular. It is uncertainty itself that inspires many aspects of medicine from patients seeking medical help to conducting medical research. Uncertainty themes are related to poor pain outcomes. The study aim was to investigate uncertainty in patients attending a 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 55 years; 51% were female. The uncertainty questionnaire scores were clinically severe for uncertainty in 69% of the sample. Of these, trauma and road traffic accidents accounted for the largest group. Pain Anxiety scores were strongly correlated with uncertainty. Pain intensity scores using the Numeric Pain Rating Scale (NPRS) were weakly correlated with uncertainty scores.

**Conclusions:** The consequences of uncertainty are extensive with the potential to influence a multitude of issues such as patient expectations, diagnosis, treatment decisions, patient confidence and satisfaction and ultimately patient compliance. Uncertainty affects chronic pain patients' outcomes and should be assessed routinely.

**Keywords:** Uncertainty; pain

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