

Cystic Fibrosis Research News

Title:

Attitudes of Pain and Opioids Prescription Practices in U.S. Cystic Fibrosis Centers

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What was your research question?

What is the frequency of chronic pain in people with CF and how is it managed in CF centres across the U.S.?

Why is this important?

Chronic pain greatly impacts quality of life for many people with CF. This is an important area that needs more research. We explored the attitudes and beliefs of CF providers surrounding pain and pain treatment to identify gaps and areas for future study.

What did you do?

With help from the American CF foundation, a survey was distributed to accredited U.S. paediatric and adult CF centres to learn more about the frequency of chronic pain in people with CF and how it is managed. Approximately 75% of CF centres responded. Most of the responders were CF physicians and clinic coordinators.

What did you find?

Adult CF centers reported having more patients with pain compared to paediatric centers. Half of adult centers reported 11-25% of their patients having pain. They also reported that patients with chronic pain often have depression or anxiety. Pediatric CF centers reported



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headache and sinus pain to be most prominent, whereas adult centers reported chest pain as the primary pain site. While referral to a pain specialist is preferred for most centers, the CF provider is more often the prescriber of pain medication such as anti-inflammatories or opioids. Adult centers reported that future guidelines on pain management would be helpful.

What does this mean and reasons for caution?

Key differences were noted between adult and paediatric CF centers, with adult centers reporting more instances of chronic pain, differing locations of pain, and increased evidence of anxiety and depression. The survey respondents report a need for guidelines on pain management for CF patients and the desire for more training in pain management. We do caution that this is a survey of CF providers, not people with CF, and the impression of providers may not coincide with the impression of patients.

What's next?

Our study highlights the need for research and training on the treatment of chronic pain in people with CF. The reasons for differences in pain between adult and paediatric people with CF should be further explored and there may be opportunities for early interventions that can reduce pain later in life.

Original manuscript citation in PubMed

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32798122/>