

### **Pain is the most common symptom for which patients seek care**

Markenson 2002

### **Pain is too often under-diagnosed and under-treated**

Dr. Douglas Justins, President of the Pain Society, November 2002

This article aims to highlight the deficiencies of the services currently available and suggest a possible alternative.

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### **The scale of the problem**

Recent estimates indicate an annual NHS cost of around ?481 million ( [\[1\]](#) ) for back pain alone, with some 5 million adults consulting a doctor (

[\[2\]](#)

) about the problem and about 52 million working days lost.

Whilst many studies cite around 7% incidence of chronic pain, a recent MORI poll on behalf of the organisation Action On Pain found that 23% of the population have chronic pain (CP).

The two most common reasons are low back pain and arthritis.

- 11% of CP patients have high disability with moderate limitation to activities.

- 16% have high disability with severe limitation.
- ? of CP patients have severe pain. (Elliott et al. *Lancet* 1999)
- 91% are unable to perform all ADLs (Activities of Daily Living).

More than 70% of patients with chronic pain who are taking painkillers are still in pain. (Pain Relief Foundation)

CSAG figures suggest estimated lost production costs approximately ?3.8 billion for the UK economy and DSS benefits ?1.4 billion.( [3] )

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[1] Maniadakis N, Gray AM *Pain* 2000; 84 (1): 95-103 The Economic Burden of Back Pain in the UK

[2] Back Pain Bandolier website [www.jr2.ox.ac.uk/bandolier/band19/b19-1-html](http://www.jr2.ox.ac.uk/bandolier/band19/b19-1-html)

[3] Clinical Standards Advisory Group *Back Pain* 2000 HMSO ISBN no. 0 11 3218877