

Impact of Chronic Low Back Pain on Employment and Productivity – Results from a Global 8,990 Patient Survey: Citizens’ Research

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INTRODUCTION

- Chronic low back pain (CLBP) is one of the most common and disabling chronic pain conditions,¹ affecting 5–10% of the global population^{2,3}
- The full impact of CLBP affecting patients’ performance in the workplace is not fully understood by employers⁴

OBJECTIVE

- To better understand the scale, impact and burden of CLBP on patients’ financial and employment status, and productivity in the workplace

METHODS

- Adults (≥18 years) were recruited via online market research consumer panels in 14 countries:^{5,6}
- A robust screener ensured that only adults with a self-reported, physician confirmed diagnosis of CLBP of ≥3 months were able to participate in the survey^{5,6}
- Using an 11-point numerical rating scale (0-10), patients self-assessed the level of their pain for the past seven days and were classified as suffering from mild (1,2,3), moderate (4,5,6) or severe (7,8,9,10) CLBP – those who selected 0 (no pain) were screened out
- Patients’ self-reported the degree to which CLBP had impacted them financially⁵
- Using the shortened Stanford Presenteeism scale (SPS-6), patients indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with six statements by selecting one of five predefined scale responses to assess the impact of their CLBP on employee health status and productivity at work in the past month⁷
- Data were weighted by sample size, CLBP prevalence and pain severity⁵
- Data analysis:
 - Data were available for 8,990 patients⁵ (mean age 52; 45% female)⁶
 - Absolute numbers of respondents shown in all tables; all percentages calculated from weighted data
 - Data were analysed in totality, as well as for all countries individually - in both sets of data analysis patients were grouped by pain severity: mild (n=1301; 10%), moderate (n=4043; 49%), severe (n=3646; 41%)⁵

RESULTS

Financial impact:

- 71% of patients were the main income earner⁵
- 63% of patients had one or more financial dependents⁶
- A third of patients with severe CLBP stated that their income had reduced due to their condition (Table 1)

Impact on employment and working life:

- 60% of patients were either in full or part time employment, or were self-employed,⁶ while 16% were unemployed or retired early
- For severe patients with an employer, more than a third had not disclosed their CLBP to them (Figure 1)
- Over a third of patients with severe CLBP had reduced their working hours or worried that they would lose their job/business because of their CLBP (Figure 2)
- More patients with severe CLBP had been negatively impacted at work by their CLBP compared to those patients with mild CLBP (Figure 3)
- Patients with severe CLBP missed more days of work on average per month due to their CLBP than patients with mild CLBP (Table 2)

TABLE 1: Impact of CLBP on patients’ income

	Mild n=1301	Moderate n=4043	Severe n=3646
My income has not reduced %	82	76	67
My income has reduced by* %			
less than 10%	5	6	8
10%-25%	5	7	10
26%-50%	5	5	9
51%-75%	2	2	4
more than 76%	2	3	4

*Patients were only able to select one of the below answer options

FIGURE 1: Patients who have not disclosed their CLBP to their employer

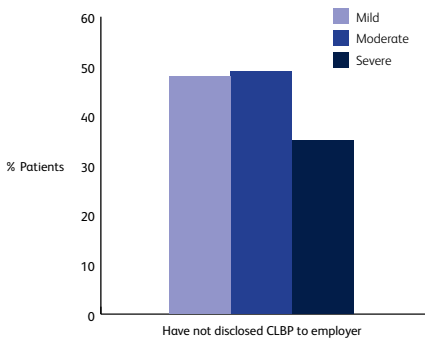
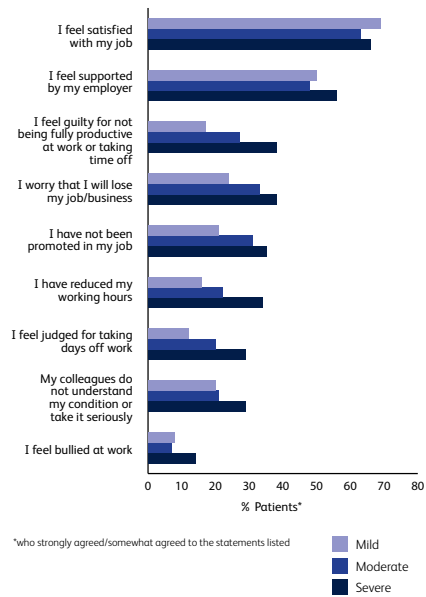
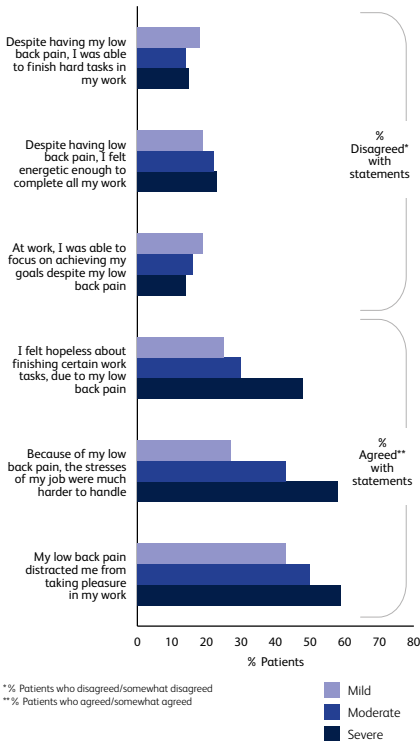


FIGURE 2: Impact of CLBP on patients’ professional/working life



*who strongly agreed/somewhat agreed to the statements listed

FIGURE 3: Impact of CLBP on patients’ work experiences (assessed using Stanford Presenteeism Scale⁷)



*% Patients who disagreed/somewhat disagreed

**% Patients who agreed/somewhat agreed

TABLE 2: Days of work missed per month due to CLBP

	Mild n=1301	Moderate n=4043	Severe n=3646
Mean days of work missed per month due to CLBP	3.7	4.1	5.2

Limitations:

- Survey participation was limited to those who have access to the internet and who actively volunteer to participate in market research studies
- The data may not be representative of the entire CLBP population
- The survey required patients to recollect and self-report their experiences which can be subject to recall bias
- Differences between pain severity groups must be considered within the context of descriptive and inferential statistical analysis

CONCLUSIONS

- CLBP is associated with decreased productivity and ability to work, as well as loss of income and perceived job security
- It is important for employers to consider the impact CLBP has on patients’ lives, and the need to provide adequate support for employees to keep them in the workforce

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DISCLOSURES

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