

Abstract

Rassu, F.S., McFadden, M., Aaron, R.V., Wegener, S.T., Ephraim, P.L, Lane, E., Brennan, G., Minick, K.I., Fritz, J.M., Skolasky, R.L. (2021, June) The Impact Of The COVID-19 Pandemic on The Relationship Between Neighborhood Deprivation And Pain-Related Experiences Among U.S. Patients With Chronic Low Back Pain. Poster presented at the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) World Congress of Pain (Online Conference)

Background and Aims: Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic could disproportionately affect the health of vulnerable populations, including patients experiencing persistent health conditions (i.e., chronic pain), along with populations living within deprived, lower socioeconomic areas. The current cross-sectional study characterized relationships between neighborhood deprivation and perceived changes in pain-related experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic (early-September to mid-October 2020) for adult patients (N = 97) with nonspecific chronic low back pain.

Methods: We collected self-report perceived experiences from participants enrolled in an ongoing pragmatic randomized trial across medical centers within the Salt Lake City, Utah and Baltimore, Maryland metropolitans. The Area Deprivation Index (composite of 17 U.S. Census deprivation metrics) reflected neighborhood deprivation based on participants' zip codes.

Results: Although those living in the neighborhoods with greater deprivation endorsed significantly poorer physical (pain severity, pain interference, physical functioning), mental (depression, anxiety), and social health during the pandemic, there were no significant differences for perceived changes in pain-related experiences (pain severity, pain interference, sleep quality) between levels of neighborhood deprivation since the onset of the pandemic. However, those in neighborhoods with greater deprivation endorsed disproportionately worse perceived changes in pain coping, social support, and mood since the pandemic.

Conclusions: The current findings offer evidence that changes in pain coping during the pandemic may be disproportionately worse for those living in deprived areas. Considering poorer pain coping may contribute to long-term consequences, the current findings suggest the need for further attention and intervention to reduce the negative affect of the pandemic for such vulnerable populations.