

Patient Expectations for Chronic Pain Management: a Systematic Review

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Up to 79% of chronic pain patients are unsatisfied with pain management and believe that their pain is inadequately treated.* Meeting patients' expectations will produce greater satisfaction with care. The challenge is to explore patients' genuine expectations and needs. However, the term expectation encompasses several concepts and may concern many aspects of health care provision. This systematic review is aimed to collect information on types of patients' expectations for chronic pain management.

Methods

- Systematic review of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods studies.
- Because of the multidimensional character of the term 'expectations' the search included subject headings and free text words related to the concept of expectations. (Figure 1)
- A framework for understanding patients' expectations (figure 1) was used to map types of expectations within structure, process, or outcome of healthcare.

Results

- Inclusion: 18 quantitative and 5 qualitative papers
- All 18 quantitative papers described outcome expectations, 3 qualitative papers reported both outcome and process expectations, and 1 paper described process and structure expectations. (Table 1)
- Patients generally have high expectations regarding pain reduction after treatment, but expectations are higher when expressed as a value expectation (ideal = 81 to 93% pain relief) than as a predicted expectation (predicted = 44 to 64% pain relief).

Conclusions

Asking the right question regarding patients' expectations is important for pain management and related research. Structure and process expectations are underrepresented in our findings. However, exploring and meeting patients' expectations regarding structure, process, and outcome aspects of pain management may increase patient satisfaction.

Figure 1. Framework for understanding expectations

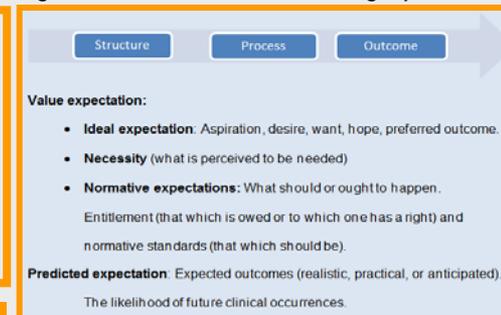


Table 1	Structure	Process	Outcome	Total
Type expectation	N papers	N papers	N papers	N papers
Quantitative	1	1	18	18
Value (only)	1(0)	1(0)	10(5)	12
Predicted (only)	0(0)	1(0)	13(8)	14
Both Value & Predicted	0	1	5	6
Qualitative	1	3	3	5
Value (only)	1(1)	3(2)	3(2)	7
Predicted (only)	0(0)	1(0)	2(0)	3
Both Value & Predicted	0	1	2	3
Total Sum	2	4	21	23

Only = restricted to this type of expectation