

New Data Uncovers Australia's Back Pain Crisis: Spinal Health Week Champions WHO Guideline

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Today, the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA) launched national [Spinal Health Week](#) (20 - 26 May 2024) with the release of new independent findings on the prevalence of back pain due to spine related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

[The Impact of Back Pain & Musculoskeletal Injuries in Australia](#), an independent national consumer survey conducted by Pureprofile, revealed that of the 1006 respondents, 907 have experienced a back related MSD with 98% (98.5% of women and 98.0% of men) experiencing one in the past 12 months.



Spinal Health Week - Back Pain Inactive Australian

Of all respondents, 30% reported low back pain as the most chronic (long-lasting) MSD condition. 28% reported experiencing moderate low back pain which interfered significantly with daily life, while 35% of low back pain sufferers classified the pain as moderate and 8% said it was severe.

According to the ABS (Oct 2023), in June 2023, Australia had 10.4 million households. With over 80% of survey respondents reporting that their household had occupants who experienced back pain, this figure suggests that 8.35 million Australian households are likely to have residents who suffer back pain.

Dr David Cahill, President of the ACA said, "Of concern is the survey showed that a large number (50%) of MSD sufferers had failed to seek a medical diagnosis, while 64% of low back pain sufferers also reported not seeking a diagnosis suggesting that official data may not reflect the true prevalence of MSDs and back pain in Australia."

The first World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline for non-surgical management of chronic

primary low back pain in adults in primary and community care settings (Dec 2023), developed from in depth research by a world-wide range of neuro-musculoskeletal health practitioners including chiropractors; recommends optimising the clinical management of people with chronic primary low back pain or non-specific low back pain, as a priority for WHO Member States.

However, 81% of low back pain sufferers opted to treat symptoms with over the counter or prescription medications rather than seek treatment, with 13% using pain relief medications daily, 12% using it frequently (3+ days per week) and 12% taking pain relief medications often (one to two times per week).

Significantly, women reported the greatest use of pain relief medication for low back pain (82.2%) with 14% taking it daily, 13% frequently and 13.5% said they used medication to relieve back pain often.

Although older Australians are considered high risk for MSDs and low back pain, others most at risk include those who do strenuous physical work including lifting, repetitive actions or standing for extended periods.

Inactive Australians who don't exercise and spend long hours sitting at work or at home are also at risk of developing musculoskeletal problems that can impact their quality of life and overall health and wellbeing.

According to the survey, 6,368 MSDs were reported. The dominant three MSDs impacting the lives of Australian's were low back pain (80.6%), neck pain (67.9%) and mid back pain (66.3%). 75% of respondents aged 18-60 within the peak working age reported back pain with 17.9% of MSDs requiring workers compensation.

For those who experience persistent symptoms beyond three months, known as chronic primary low back pain, the pain is often not caused by any particular condition.

Dr Cahill said, "While the annual cost of MSDs to the Australian economy exceeds \$55.1 billion in direct health costs, lost productivity, reduced quality of life and increased disability, the personal cost to sufferers of persistent low back pain can be life-limiting having a negative impact on their mental health and overall wellbeing while placing a substantial financial burden on families, communities, and our healthcare system."

The survey results, together with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) analysis that MSDs account for the greatest proportion of persistent pain conditions and are the second largest contributor to disability worldwide with low back pain the single leading cause of disability globally; form a compelling case for a proactive, strategic response to how Australians approach back pain.

Seeking appropriate healthcare options that can limit the use of medications by treating the cause of the condition with recommended exercises can help prevent reoccurrence.

www.spinalhealthweek.org.au

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