



In Motion

Highlighting Articles Advancing Pain Research in Canada and the World

Featured article:

Killackey, T., Noel, M., Birnie, K. A., Choinière, M., Pagé, M. G., Dassieu, L., Lacasse, A., Lalloo, C., Brennenstuhl, S., Poulin, P., Ingelmo, P., Ali, S., Battaglia, M., Campbell, F., Smith, A., Harris, L., Mohabir, V., Benayon, M., Jordan, I., Marianayagam, J., & Stinson, J. (2021).

COVID-19 Pandemic Impact and Response in Canadian Pediatric Chronic Pain Care: A National Survey of Medical Directors and Pain Professionals. *Canadian Journal of Pain*, 5(1), 139-150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24740527.2021.1931069>

Key insights from the study:

- **Switch to Virtual Care:** The study shows how quickly pediatric pain clinics and healthcare professionals moved to virtual care (telehealth) during the pandemic.
- **Challenges Faced:** Key challenges included technology-related difficulties, challenges related to costs, and concerns about infrastructure, privacy, and delivering care.
- **Impact on Patients:** Even though clinics moved to virtual care, most reported that patients' pain levels and the number of pain episodes did not change much. However, some clinics noticed an increase in anxiety and depression among patients.

What happened?

Researchers conducted two online surveys: one with medical directors of Canadian pediatric pain clinics and another with healthcare professionals working in pediatric pain care. These surveys aimed to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the delivery of chronic pain care for children. Responses were collected between June and September 2020, covering the first six months of the pandemic. The surveys looked at changes in how services were delivered, how patients were affected, and the challenges clinics faced in moving to virtual care.

Why is it important?

This study provides important insights into how pediatric chronic pain care systems adapted and stayed strong during the pandemic. By understanding the challenges and successes of switching to virtual care, we can improve healthcare policies and practices for future emergencies. The findings also emphasize the need to address technology-related difficulties and challenges related to costs to make sure all patients have equal access to care.

What now?

This study shows the potential for virtual care solutions in managing chronic pain for children. It highlights the need to overcome challenges such as tech issues and unequal access. Future research should focus on improving virtual care delivery, exploring a mix of in-person and virtual care, and developing guidelines to support the effective and fair use of telehealth services for children with chronic pain. This approach can improve care delivery and ensure ongoing support for patients during crises and beyond.

