



# In Motion

Highlighting Articles Advancing Pain Research in Canada and the World

## Featured article:

Sommer, J.L., Blaney, C., El-Gabalawy, R. (2019). **A population-based examination of suicidality in comorbid generalized anxiety disorder and chronic pain.** Journal of Affective Disorders, 257, 562-567. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2019.07.016>

## Key insights from the study:

- **Impact of Multiple Conditions:** Individuals with both generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and chronic pain, especially migraines and arthritis, are at a higher risk of suicidality compared to those with GAD alone.
- **Suicide Risk Factors:** The study highlights that having both GAD and migraines increases the odds of suicidal thoughts and plans, while having both GAD and arthritis increases the odds of suicide attempts even after accounting for the impact of other co-occurring mental disorders and pain conditions.
- **Need for Comprehensive Assessment:** Emphasizes the importance of assessing and monitoring suicidality in patients with GAD and chronic pain conditions.

## What happened?

Researchers analyzed data from the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey-Mental Health, which included responses from over 25,000 Canadians aged 15 and older. They specifically examined the associations between GAD, chronic pain conditions (arthritis, migraine, back pain), and suicidality (suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts). Using multiple logistic regressions, they compared individuals with GAD alone to those with both GAD and chronic pain.

## Why is it important?

This study shows that people with both GAD and a chronic pain condition may feel more burdened and stressed leading to a higher risk of suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts. Understanding these risks can help healthcare providers better identify and support patients who are at risk. The findings also highlight the need for care plans that treat both mental health and chronic pain together.

## What now?

The study suggests that healthcare providers should carefully check for signs of suicide risk in patients with both GAD and chronic pain. It is important to have treatment plans that manage both anxiety and pain together. Future research should look into why these conditions are linked and find ways to reduce the risk of suicide in these patients.

