



# In Motion

Highlighting Articles Advancing Pain Research in Canada and the World

## Featured article:

Roy, R., Sommer, J. L., Bolton, J. M., & El-Gabalawy, R. (2021). **Understanding correlates of suicidality among those with usual pain and discomfort: A Canadian nationally representative study.** *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 151, 110651. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2021.110651>

## Key insights from the study:

- **Increased Risk:** The study identifies factors that increase the risk of suicidality among individuals with chronic pain, such as disability and activity limitations.
- **Protective Factors:** Highlights protective factors that decrease the risk, including social support and positive mental health.
- **Significant Findings:** Positive mental health emerged as the most significant protective factor against suicidality.

## What happened?

Researchers looked at information from the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey, which included 25,113 people. They focused on 5,891 people who experienced usual pain or discomfort. The study examined how often these people had suicidal thoughts, made suicide plans, or attempted suicide. They also looked at different factors that might increase the risk (like disability and activity limitations) or decrease the risk (like having social support and good mental health).

## Why is it important?

This study shows that people with usual pain or discomfort are at higher risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviours, with over 1/5 experiencing suicide thoughts. Rates are further elevated among those who have greater disability and whose pain prevented most activities. On the other hand, having good mental health and strong social support can lower this risk. These findings help healthcare providers understand the importance of looking at both the physical and mental health of patients with chronic pain. By knowing what increases and decreases suicide risk, healthcare teams can better support and care for their patients.

## What now?

The study suggests that promoting good mental health and providing strong social support can help reduce suicide risk in people with chronic pain. Healthcare providers should create treatment plans that address both pain and emotional well-being. Future research should focus on finding ways to strengthen mental health and social support for these patients to improve their overall health and safety.

