



In Motion

Highlighting Articles Advancing Pain Research in Canada and the World

Featured article:

Vun, E., Turner, S., Sareen, J., Mota, N., Afifi, T. O., & El-Gabalawy, R. (2018). **Prevalence of comorbid chronic pain and mental health conditions in Canadian Armed Forces active personnel: analysis of a cross-sectional survey.** *CMAJ Open*, 6(4), E528-E536.
<https://doi.org/10.9778/cmajo.20180093>

Key insights from the study:

- **High Rates of Pain and Mental Health Issues:** Many active members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have both chronic pain and mental health problems, and these conditions co-occur at elevated rates. Chronic pain conditions have particularly strong relationships with post-traumatic stress disorder among military personnel.
- **Impact of Combined Conditions:** People with both chronic pain and mental health issues, like PTSD, experience worse pain and more trouble doing daily activities.
- **Need for Complete Care:** The study highlights the importance of treating both physical and mental health issues together to help military personnel feel better and function well.

What happened?

Researchers looked at data from the 2013 Canadian Forces Mental Health Survey, which included 6,696 regular members of the CAF. They focused on how common it was for these members to have both chronic pain (like arthritis, back problems, and migraines) and mental health disorders (like PTSD, depression, anxiety, and panic disorders). They also studied how having both conditions affected pain levels and daily activities.

Why is it important?

This study shows how common it is for military personnel to have both chronic pain and mental health issues. For example, those with both conditions, especially PTSD, reported more severe pain and had more trouble with daily activities. Knowing this helps healthcare providers create better treatment plans that address both types of problems. This can improve the quality of life and ability to function for military personnel who have these challenges.

What now?

The study suggests that healthcare providers should check for both chronic pain and mental health issues in military personnel. Treating both problems together is important. Future research should find out why these problems often happen together and how to better treat them. This way, the healthcare system can better support military personnel, helping them manage their conditions and improve their overall well-being.