Attitudes towards disease model explanations of chronic pain among Canadian and US adults without chronic pain: A contrastive vignette technique study

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BACKGROUND

• Chronic pain is highly stigmatized
• Chronic pain was recently recognized as a disease in its own right
• Assumption: Labelling chronic pain a brain disease will reduce stigma

AIM

• Investigate the effects of a brain disease explanation of chronic pain on the degree to which people without chronic pain stigmatize others who live with chronic pain.

METHODS

• Design: Contrastive Vignette Technique (5x1 between-subjects design)
• Participants: Adults in the U.S. and Canada without chronic pain
• Data Collection: 15-minute online survey
  • Demographics, Familiarity with Chronic Pain, Social Distance, and Attitude-Related Items.
• Analysis: Kruskal-Wallis, Mann-Whitney U, and Beta Regression Model

TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rating (Likert Scale)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much is Sam in?</td>
<td>0 = No Pain at All 7 = Pain as Bad as It Could Be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much sympathy do you have for Sam?</td>
<td>0 = No sympathy at all 7 = A lot of sympathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How willing are you to help Sam with daily activities?</td>
<td>0 = Totally unwilling 7 = Totally willing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2

RESULTS

FIGURE 1. Country

FIGURE 2. Age

FIGURE 3. Gender

TABLE 3. Kruskal-Wallis & Mann-Whitney U Test Results: Statistically significant impacts of vignette on dimensions of stigma

CONCLUSION

• Brain- and disease-based explanations of chronic pain influence certain dimensions of pain-related stigma felt towards those living with chronic pain
• People without chronic pain perceive those living with chronic pain differently depending on the perceived source of the pain
• These findings have implications for public awareness and anti-stigma campaigns

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