

A photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, sitting on the floor with her back to the camera, hugging her knees. She is looking down. The background is a plain white wall. The entire image is framed by a thick, black, hand-painted border.

Executive Summary of HealthyWomen's Chronic Pain Survey

Introduction

This report provides an overview of a HealthyWomen survey of women who experience and live with chronic pain. The survey aims to capture their views on how pain should be treated and managed, including the impact of chronic pain on their daily lives. We surveyed participants on:

- Pain cause and diagnosis
- Pain treatment
- Health care provider's treatment of pain
- Pain's interference with daily activities
- Access to information on pain

Methodology

A total of 1,004 respondents completed the online survey between May 23, 2019, and June 18, 2019. Respondents were reached via social media, newsletter and partner outreach.

Key Findings

- **Of the 1,004 women who have experienced persistent or recurring pain for more than three months, 90 percent have received a diagnosis for the cause of their pain.** Common causes of pain reported by respondents included arthritis, migraine, fibromyalgia, autoimmune diseases, pain related to surgery and spinal disc issues.
- **Nearly half—48 percent—of respondents are treating their pain with opioids.** The most common pain treatments, other than opioids, are other prescription medications, over-the-counter medications (like ibuprofen, aspirin, naproxen, acetaminophen) and physiotherapy (movement/exercise).
- **Thirty-six percent of respondents don't think their health care provider (HCP) takes their pain seriously.** Forty-five percent say their HCP is somewhat understanding, and 17 percent say their HCP is not understanding.
- **Sixty-two percent of women sometimes feel hopeless and/or helpless about their pain,** with 35 percent saying they always feel hopeless and/or helpless.
- **Almost all respondents—95 percent—say their pain affects their ability to live a full and active life.** And more than half (53 percent) say their pain interferes with their sleep.
- **Thirty-eight percent of respondents think they do not have access to enough information about pain.** The most popular positive changes women say they would like to see about how pain is managed are: adequately trained providers (65 percent), support from HCP (58 percent), and availability of resources (56 percent).

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