

# Community Chronic Pain Education Classes in Collaboration with Pain Concern: A Pilot in West Dunbartonshire

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## Introduction

The Community Chronic Pain Education classes were developed as part of the Glasgow Chronic Pain Managed Clinical Network's drive to improve the management of chronic pain in primary care. The classes were designed to deliver early, evidence-based, pain self-management information in a community setting to individuals who had suffered from chronic pain for more than one year. The programme content was developed and delivered by the Glasgow Pain Management Programme team. Sessions were delivered initially, on two occasions each month at the Vale Centre for Health and Social Care (VCHSC). These sessions lasted for 2 hours and they covered, understanding pain; activity management; the management of sleep problems; stress management; flare-up management; and comparing and contrasting medical vs self-management.

## Aim

To develop and deliver a novel, community-based, pain self-management information session and to evaluate its acceptability to patients residing in primary care.

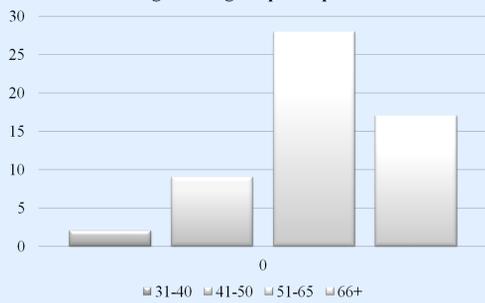
## Method

Patients were signposted to the classes by either their GP, community pharmacist, local physiotherapist, or through poster advertisements that were displayed locally. The content of the class consisted of a, much-distilled version, of the material taught on the Glasgow Pain Management Programme. A total of 57 patients attended the classes and provided feedback over an eight month period (30/10/14 – 30/06/15).

## Results

Patients attending the classes were typically in their late middle age (Figure 1) and had suffered from pain for over 10 years (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Age of participants



The majority (66%) of patients reported being signposted to the classes by their GP. As regards the length of the session, 74% found the two hours "just right". Overall, 98% (53 out of the 54 patients who provided an answer) would recommend the session to others. Participants in the classes were also invited to add free text comments to the feedback questionnaire and some of these are reproduced below.

Figure 2 Length of time with pain



## Results (continued)

Table 1. Evaluation of topics

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	DNC
Understanding Pain	32%	37%	21%	1.5%	1.5%	7%
Managing activity	30%	40%	18%	1.5%	1.5%	9%
Stress Management	35%	26%	26%	2%	2%	9%
Sleep Management	21%	28%	19%	6%		26%
Medical Vs Self-management	32%	26%	21%	7%	3.5%	10.5%
Flare-up management	35%	28%	23%	3%	2%	9%

## Conclusion

The provision of information to patients about their chronic pain condition is recommended by SIGN Guideline 136. There is also evidence that certain types of pain education can alleviate pain, reduce catastrophic thinking and improve knowledge (Geenen, et al., 2015). Whilst this study attempted a similar evaluation of its effects (participants were asked to complete a knowledge and self-efficacy questionnaire prior to the class and three months after class attendance) a low response rate prevents reporting of these results. As this project is ongoing, we hope to report on such effects at a later date. Even without such an evaluation, it is encouraging that these brief, educational sessions appear to have been well-received by patients in primary care and that the vast majority of participants would recommend the class to others.

## Relevance for Patient Care

The Scottish Service Model proposes that services for chronic pain are organised in a stepped care fashion with an emphasis on providing information about chronic pain to the broadest group of chronic pain service users. Most Scottish NHS services for chronic pain, however, are delivered in specialist secondary care settings. Feedback from patients attending intensive educational rehabilitation packages in tertiary care in Glasgow suggests that patients wished that they had received this information earlier in their pain career. These classes were an attempt to meet the requirements of Level 1 of the Scottish Service Model and to make information about chronic pain accessible to the widest group of people with chronic pain.



## Recent Developments

Since the pilot appeared to be well-received by patients, NHS GG&C, in conjunction with the charity Pain Concern, have attempted to establish education sessions at a number of sites across Glasgow. A small number of patients who have graduated from the Glasgow Pain Management Programme have been trained to deliver the classes and have been supported in this by volunteers who are post-graduate psychology students. Classes are currently delivered in 5 sites, with plans to expand provision further. Pain Concern's role has been to manage trainers and volunteers, promote the service, and to book patients into classes.

## References

Geenen, LJ, Martin DJ, Adams, N, Clarke, CL, Dunbar, M, Jones, D, McNamee, P, Schofield, P & Smith, BH (2015). Effects of education to facilitate knowledge about chronic pain for adults: A systematic review with meta-analysis. *Systematic Reviews*, 4:132.

SIGN 136. (2013). Management of Chronic Pain

"It is very worthwhile for understanding pain. Feel I can come to terms with my pain. Would enjoy coming to another session."

"It gave an insight into pain and many ideas for coping strategies. Speakers were excellent, friendly and using plain language."

"Although I have heard a lot of it before and already use some of the info, it helped reinforce what I already do. For someone new to this it's a great introduction."