



Interaction of Disease with Mood and Social Factors in the Treatment of Pelvic Pain

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Biopsychosocial Factors Affecting Treatment of Pelvic Pain

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SUMMARY

When a patient experiences pain without a clear medical reason, all too often they are told: "it's all in your head". Many people with chronic pelvic pain are upset when they are told this. In reality, pain is more than just a physical experience. In many cases of chronic pain, testing and biopsies look normal. Doctors can also see tissue or organ damage in patients who don't have any pain. Chronic pain is a complex reaction between your body and the nerves in your spine and brain.

The severity of pain and how much it affects your life depends on more than just how much "damage" is present. For example, what does this pain mean to you? Does it keep you from working, sleeping or having a satisfying relationship? Does it make you feel helpless or anxious? Do you sometimes blame yourself? All of these reactions are valid, but can affect your pain and your recovery.

Chronic pain patients who experience more fear and anger about their pain may have a harder time recovering from their pain. This is because thoughts are actually nerve impulses. These nerve impulses can contribute to an increased pain response. It has been shown that changing your beliefs about your pain can help you to decrease your pain. Living with pelvic pain can be a frustrating experience. While you work with your pain provider to find the causes of and treatments for your pain, you should also be learning to reduce your fear and anger about your pain. Having a team in place to provide education and strategies for stress reduction and relaxation will improve the outcomes of your treatment.