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Note: In this handout we will use the term ‘males’ or ‘men’ but recognize that not all people assigned male at birth will identify with this term.

Background

Pain that persists in the pelvis of those assigned male at birth can be given a number of names - Chronic Pelvic Pain Syndrome, Chronic Prostatitis, or Chronic Urogenital Pain Syndrome.

People may worry pain is a sign of an infection or cancer. When testing such as bloodwork, cultures, and scans are normal, medications such as antibiotics and anti-inflammatories do not help. Many people with pelvic pain suffer in silence because they are confused or afraid to seek help.

If this describes you, you are not alone! This type of pain can occur in 10-15% of males. There are many things you can do to help with your pain.

Symptoms

The symptoms experienced can vary between individuals and over time but may include:

- Pressure, throbbing, aching or burning in the pelvis, penis, testicles, scrotum, groin, perineum (between the scrotum and anus), rectum/anus, thighs, lower back or tailbone
- Pain with sitting, walking, touch
- Bowel problems: difficulty or pain on passing a bowel motion, bloating, smearing, diarrhea and/or constipation
- Bladder problems: pain with a full bladder or on urinating, needing urinate more often or very suddenly, needing to get up several times at night, difficulty starting or a weak stream
- Sexual problems: low libido (sex drive), erectile difficulties, pain with erections or ejaculation
- Low self-esteem, low energy, anxiety, depression, social withdrawal, worry, and stress

Why does this occur?

When pain has lasted more than a few weeks it typically becomes more complex and has a number of ‘pieces’, which can be summarized in the infographic below.

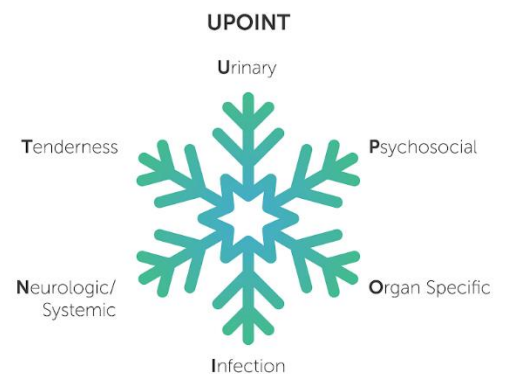


Figure 1: www.ogmagazine.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/OG-Mag-Winter-2019-For-Web.pdf

- Persisting pain is typically not due to infection (although might have been triggered by an infection in some cases but then the pain does not go away when the infection is treated)
- Tight holding patterns in the pelvic floor. When muscles are constantly tensed, shortened and tight, they can really ache - often pelvic muscle pain can be one of the worst parts of the pain
- Nerves can be damaged by injury or surgery and lead to pain
- Stress, worry and life events can contribute to tension in the body
- The nervous system can become hypersensitive and amplify pain
- All of this can become a vicious cycle

What can be done?

Getting the right team to identify and address each of the “points” above

See your family doctor/primary care provider, sexual health clinic or urologist to rule out any infections or concerning conditions. Often the tests are normal - this does not mean your pain is less real

Self-care options

Fluids/diet

- Drink more water,
- Drink less caffeine, alcohol and carbonated drinks
- Increase your fiber intake

Exercise

- Remember the saying “motion is lotion rest is rust”
- Do not overdo it - start slow and no need to do heavy gym workouts
- Try gentle walking or light activity like yoga

Relaxation

- Pain is often exacerbated with an increase in stress, anxiety and tension in a vicious cycle. Moving from a state of fight/flight is vital for recuperation and recovery

Who you can see for extra help

- Trusted family doctor/ primary care provider
- Pelvic health physical therapist
- Urologist
- Sexual health clinic
- Pain therapist
- Specialist pain doctor
- Whole-person approach pain clinic

Web resources you might find helpful

- ✓ [Pelvic Pain in Men - Shan Morrison and the Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia](#)
- ✓ [6 Exercises to Relieve Male Pelvic Pain to Do at Home](#)
- ✓ [What is Prostatitis?](#)
- ✓ [Pain Below, What Every Man Should Know](#)
- ✓ [Rethinking Chronic Prostatitis Pain and Pelvic Health Concerns](#)
- ✓ [What is chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome \(CP/CPPS\)](#)

Check back to see if these are active before finalizing?

- ✓ <https://drsusieg.com/male-pelvic-pain> (Broken Link?)
- ✓ <https://drsusieg.com/pelvic-pain-in-men-book> (Broken Link?)