

TITLE: Assessment of patient with chronic pain

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ABSTRACT

It is widely accepted that the assessment of a patient with chronic pain requires the consideration of multiple dimensions. Broadly, these are: somatic/biological processes, psychological processes, and their interaction with the patient's social environment. In many clinical settings this is conducted by a multidisciplinary team with expertise to cover these domains. However, this is not always feasible and frequently pain medicine clinicians are faced with doing it all themselves. While imaging and various lab results may be available, it is often noted that good psychometric data on the psychological and social domains are not available or readily interpretable. There is a solid case that if this omission could be remedied it would greatly enhance chronic pain assessments, whether conducted by the individual clinician or a team. This paper attempts to address this issue by describing the case for using instruments with good psychometric properties and how they can be used in the clinic setting. Case examples will be used to illustrate the approach.