

A meta-ethnography of health-care professionals' experience of treating adults with chronic non-malignant pain to improve the experience and quality of health care

Fran Toye,^{1,2*} Kate Seers³ and Karen Barker^{1,2}

¹Physiotherapy Research Unit, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Oxford, UK

²Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences (NDORMS), University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

³Royal College of Nursing Research Institute, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

*Corresponding author frantoye@hotmail.com

Declared competing interests of authors: Fran Toye, Kate Seers and Karen Barker authored two studies that are included in this qualitative evidence synthesis. Kate Seers is a Health Services and Delivery Research board member and a Health Services Research Commissioning board member.

Published April 2018

DOI: 10.3310/hsdr06170

Plain English summary

HCPs' experience of treating adults with chronic non-malignant pain

Health Services and Delivery Research 2018; Vol. 6: No. 17

DOI: 10.3310/hsdr06170

NIHR Journals Library www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk

Plain English summary

Chronic pain is pain that persists long after the time when one would expect to get better. People with chronic pain do not always feel that they are being listened to or valued by health-care professionals (HCPs). We wanted to understand and improve this experience by finding out how HCPs felt about providing health care to people with chronic non-malignant pain. We did this by bringing together the published qualitative research exploring HCPs' experiences. Qualitative research often uses in-depth interviews with individuals, or groups, to explore different perspectives. This study provides a distilled form of knowledge for practitioners, policy-makers and patients, which can help us to understand and improve the experience for patients with chronic pain. We worked alongside an advisory group that included a mix of patient representatives and HCPs. We also worked with a media agency to produce a short film of our findings, which can be watched online (see *Report Supplementary Material 1*; URL: www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/hsdr/1419807/#/documentation; accessed 24 July 2017).

This study brings together the findings from 77 studies exploring the experience of > 1500 HCPs, including doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. We highlight areas that help us to understand why the experience of health care can be difficult for patients and HCPs. Importantly, HCPs can find it challenging if they cannot find a diagnosis for pain and at times this can make them feel sceptical about pain. The findings also suggest that HCPs find it difficult to balance their dual role of keeping a good relationship with the individual patient and representing the health-care system. The ability to support patients to live a valued life with pain is described as a craft that is learnt through experience. We also learnt that, like their patients, HCPs can experience a sense of loss because they cannot solve the problem of pain.

Health Services and Delivery Research

ISSN 2050-4349 (Print)

ISSN 2050-4357 (Online)

This journal is a member of and subscribes to the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (www.publicationethics.org/).

Editorial contact: journals.library@nihr.ac.uk

The full HS&DR archive is freely available to view online at www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/hsdr. Print-on-demand copies can be purchased from the report pages of the NIHR Journals Library website: www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk

Criteria for inclusion in the *Health Services and Delivery Research* journal

Reports are published in *Health Services and Delivery Research* (HS&DR) if (1) they have resulted from work for the HS&DR programme or programmes which preceded the HS&DR programme, and (2) they are of a sufficiently high scientific quality as assessed by the reviewers and editors.

HS&DR programme

The Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR) programme, part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), was established to fund a broad range of research. It combines the strengths and contributions of two previous NIHR research programmes: the Health Services Research (HSR) programme and the Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) programme, which were merged in January 2012.

The HS&DR programme aims to produce rigorous and relevant evidence on the quality, access and organisation of health services including costs and outcomes, as well as research on implementation. The programme will enhance the strategic focus on research that matters to the NHS and is keen to support ambitious evaluative research to improve health services.

For more information about the HS&DR programme please visit the website: <http://www.nets.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/hsdr>

This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HS&DR programme or one of its preceding programmes as project number 14/198/07. The contractual start date was in July 2015. The final report began editorial review in May 2017 and was accepted for publication in August 2017. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HS&DR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HS&DR programme or the Department of Health and Social Care. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HS&DR programme or the Department of Health and Social Care.

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2018. This work was produced by Toye *et al.* under the terms of a commissioning contract issued by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. This issue may be freely reproduced for the purposes of private research and study and extracts (or indeed, the full report) may be included in professional journals provided that suitable acknowledgement is made and the reproduction is not associated with any form of advertising. Applications for commercial reproduction should be addressed to: NIHR Journals Library, National Institute for Health Research, Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre, Alpha House, University of Southampton Science Park, Southampton SO16 7NS, UK.

Published by the NIHR Journals Library (www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk), produced by Prepress Projects Ltd, Perth, Scotland (www.prepress-projects.co.uk).

Health Services and Delivery Research Editor-in-Chief

Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone Professor of Health Services and Implementation Research, Bangor University, UK

NIHR Journals Library Editor-in-Chief

Professor Tom Walley Director, NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies and Director of the EME Programme, UK

NIHR Journals Library Editors

Professor Ken Stein Chair of HTA and EME Editorial Board and Professor of Public Health, University of Exeter Medical School, UK

Professor Andrée Le May Chair of NIHR Journals Library Editorial Group (HS&DR, PGfAR, PHR journals)

Dr Martin Ashton-Key Consultant in Public Health Medicine/Consultant Advisor, NETSCC, UK

Professor Matthias Beck Professor of Management, Cork University Business School, Department of Management and Marketing, University College Cork, Ireland

Dr Tessa Crilly Director, Crystal Blue Consulting Ltd, UK

Dr Eugenia Cronin Senior Scientific Advisor, Wessex Institute, UK

Dr Peter Davidson Director of the NIHR Dissemination Centre, University of Southampton, UK

Ms Tara Lamont Scientific Advisor, NETSCC, UK

Dr Catriona McDaid Senior Research Fellow, York Trials Unit, Department of Health Sciences, University of York, UK

Professor William McGuire Professor of Child Health, Hull York Medical School, University of York, UK

Professor Geoffrey Meads Professor of Wellbeing Research, University of Winchester, UK

Professor John Norrie Chair in Medical Statistics, University of Edinburgh, UK

Professor John Powell Consultant Clinical Adviser, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), UK

Professor James Raftery Professor of Health Technology Assessment, Wessex Institute, Faculty of Medicine, University of Southampton, UK

Dr Rob Riemsma Reviews Manager, Kleijnen Systematic Reviews Ltd, UK

Professor Helen Roberts Professor of Child Health Research, UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, UK

Professor Jonathan Ross Professor of Sexual Health and HIV, University Hospital Birmingham, UK

Professor Helen Snooks Professor of Health Services Research, Institute of Life Science, College of Medicine, Swansea University, UK

Professor Jim Thornton Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Nottingham, UK

Professor Martin Underwood Director, Warwick Clinical Trials Unit, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK

Please visit the website for a list of members of the NIHR Journals Library Board:
www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/about/editors

Editorial contact: journals.library@nihr.ac.uk