

NATIONAL CLINICAL GUIDELINE FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT/REHABILITATION OF PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC WIDESPREAD PAIN

Quick guide

Definition of the group of patients	
	The group of patients comprises adult patients with persistent (duration of at least 3-6 months), chronic widespread pain. Widespread means that the pain is diffusely generalised in the musculoskeletal system. Due to the pain, the patients level of functioning is reduced to an extent that impacts the ability to work and perform everyday tasks and/or engage in leisure activity. Medical history and physical examination supplemented by paraclinical examinations such as diagnostic imaging and blood tests have not lead to diagnosing another somatic or mental disease that explains the condition better. Thus, patients with localised pain and patients with pain which can be fully explained by another defined somatic or mental disease are not covered by this national clinical guideline.
Diagnosing and assessment	
√	It is good practice to consider a patient with chronic widespread pain fully diagnosed when relevant differential diagnoses have been excluded. The patient can be fully diagnosed based on the medical history, the symptoms, the duration and a physical examination. Chronic widespread pain is considered a condition with a wide variety of potential diagnosis designations.
√	It is good practice to assess the overall functioning of the patient based on a bio-psycho-social conceptual framework.

Treatment	
↑	Consider offering supervised training to selected patients with chronic widespread pain if the purpose is to increase the level of functioning. (⊕○○○)
↑	Consider offering CBT or ACT to patients with chronic widespread pain. (⊕⊕○○)
√	It is good practice to offer interventions involving strategies that promote activity and participation in daily life to selected patients with chronic widespread pain.
↑↑	Offer patient education to patients with chronic widespread pain. (⊕⊕⊕○)
√	It is good practice to identify the functioning of the patient in relation to the labour market and to identify his or her working conditions including how the job affects the patient's disease, way of life and health in the eyes of the patient. The purpose of this is to make the patient aware of the possibility of introducing interventions at the workplace aimed at labour market retention.
↑	Consider offering multidisciplinary intervention consisting of at least two treatment modalities provided by at least two professional groups to selected patients with chronic widespread pain. (⊕⊕○○)* *Multidisciplinary intervention is mainly recommended for patients with pain of a duration of more than 6 months and with complex issues due to the pain condition, cf. the DHA's speciality guidelines.

Pharmacological treatment	
↓	Use only tramadol for patients with chronic widespread pain if other alternatives have shown lack of efficacy. (⊕⊕○○)
√	It is good practice <i>not</i> to offer treatment with strong opioids to patients with chronic widespread pain.
↑	Consider offering tricyclic antidepressants (TCA) for pain relief in patients with chronic widespread pain. (⊕⊕⊕○)
↑	Consider offering duloxetine for pain relief in patients with chronic widespread pain following failure of treatment with TCA. (⊕⊕⊕○)
↓	SSRIs should only be offered for pain relief in patients with chronic widespread pain upon due consideration, since the pain relieving effect is limited. (⊕⊕○○)
↑	Consider offering gabapentin or pregabalin for pain relief in patients with chronic widespread pain. (⊕⊕⊕○)

About the quick guide

This quick guide contains the key recommendations from the national clinical guideline for the assessment and treatment/rehabilitation of patients with chronic widespread pain. The guideline was prepared by the DHA.

The national clinical guideline for the assessment and treatment/rehabilitation of patients with chronic widespread pain focuses on instructions on how to handle selected and well-defined clinical issues related to the group of patients in question.

Thus, the guideline contains recommendations for selected parts of the field only and therefore must be seen alongside the other guidelines, process descriptions etc. in this field.

The recommendations are preceded by the following indications of their strength:

- ↑↑ = a strong recommendation for
- ↓↓ = a strong recommendation against
- ↑ = a weak/conditional recommendation for
- ↓ = a weak/conditional recommendation against

The symbol (√) stands for good practice. This symbol is used in case of lack of evidence, when the working group wants to emphasise particular aspects of the established clinical practice.

The recommendations are followed by the following symbols which indicate the strength of the underlying evidence – from high to very low:

- (⊕⊕⊕⊕) = high
- (⊕⊕⊕○) = moderate
- (⊕⊕○○) = low
- (⊕○○○) = very low

In case of lack of evidence, a recommendation is not followed by a symbol. This applies to the good practice recommendations.

Further information at sundhedsstyrelsen.dk

At sundhedsstyrelsen.dk, a full-length version of the national clinical guideline is available, including a detailed review of the underlying evidence for the recommendations.

About the national clinical guidelines

The national clinical guideline is one of the 47 national clinical guidelines to be prepared by the DHA during the period 2013-2016.

Further information about the choice of subjects, method and process is available at sundhedsstyrelsen.dk.
