



A Regional Survey of Pain: What Public Knows About Pain

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INTRODUCTION

This study was performed in the county of Ponta Delgada, S. Miguel Island (135000 total inhabitants), Azores, Portugal, by the volunteers, professionals of health, that support the **Chronic Pain Patients Association**.

This Association, in coordination with the Mayor of Ponta Delgada City, celebrates since 2014 the international event **One Hundred Cities Against Pain**, launched by the Italian **ISAL Foundation** that promotes knowledge, scientific research and training in the field of pain therapy.

AIM OF INVESTIGATION

To characterize the population who has pain and to know what is the knowledge about chronic pain.

METHODS

During two months, we used an anonymous questionnaire (first part) drawn up by the ISAL Foundation and asked people from rural areas, from the city and some who were going to the local hospital for consultations.

We obtained authorization from the Chronic Pain Patients Association, the ISAL Foundation and the Divino Espírito Santo Hospital.

The number of 53437 inhabitants, more than 18 years, in Ponta Delgada, was calculated based on the 2011 census.

The respondents were informed that it was an anonymous questionnaire and that there would be disclosure of the results.

Sample: 581 respondents, aged 18 years and over (sampling rate 1.09%).

69.5% female
30.5% male

18 to 35 years 24%
36 to 50 years 25%
51 to 70 years 35.6%
Over 70 years 15.4%

RESULTS

- 50.8% referred that they suffer from Chronic Pain
- 42.9% knew anyone suffering from Chronic Pain
- Figure 1: Do you know anyone who suffers from Chronic Pain?
- Figure 2: Main causes of their pain
- Figure 3: In your opinion, who should be indicated to treat Chronic Pain?
- Figure 4: If you have already been to a Specialist Doctor in Pain Medicine, who recommended to you?
- Table 1: Causes of pain taking into account the sex and the age group of respondents
- Table 2: Are you satisfied with the treatment of your pain?

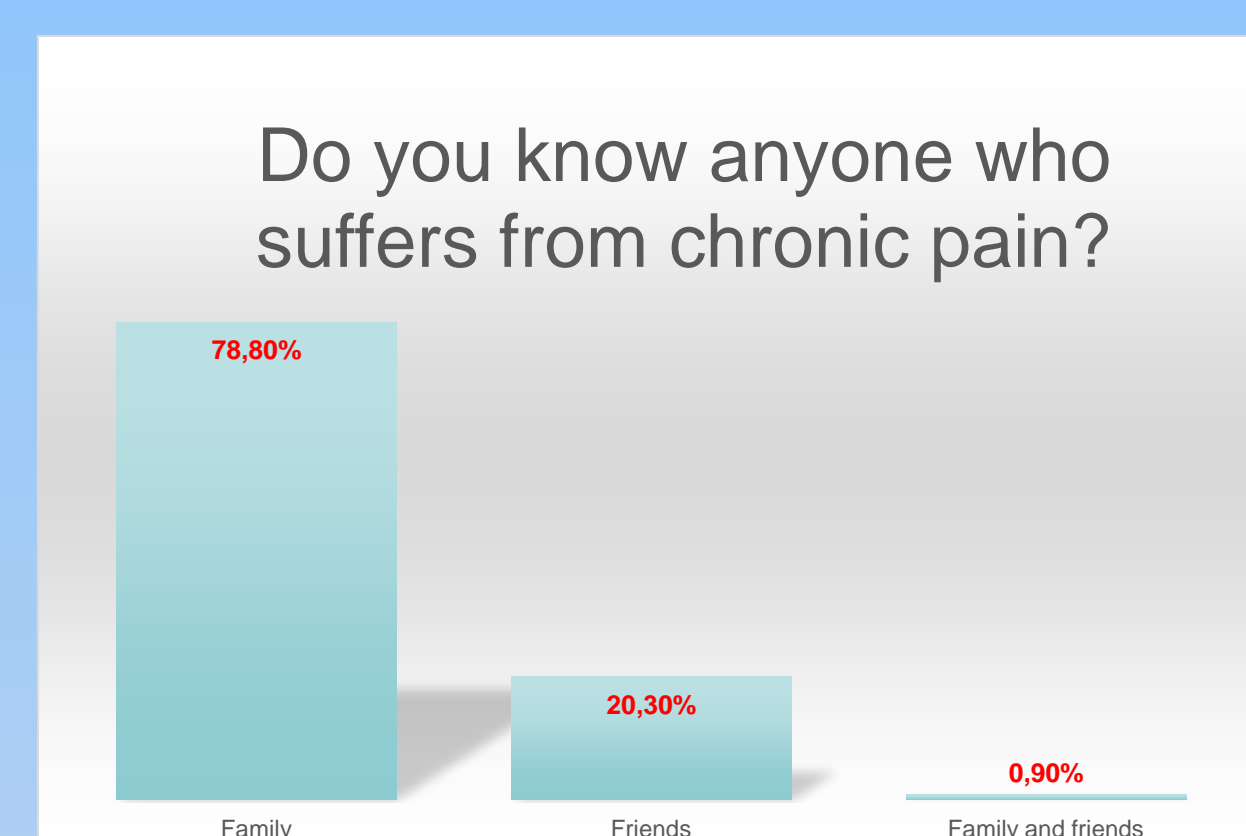


Figure 1

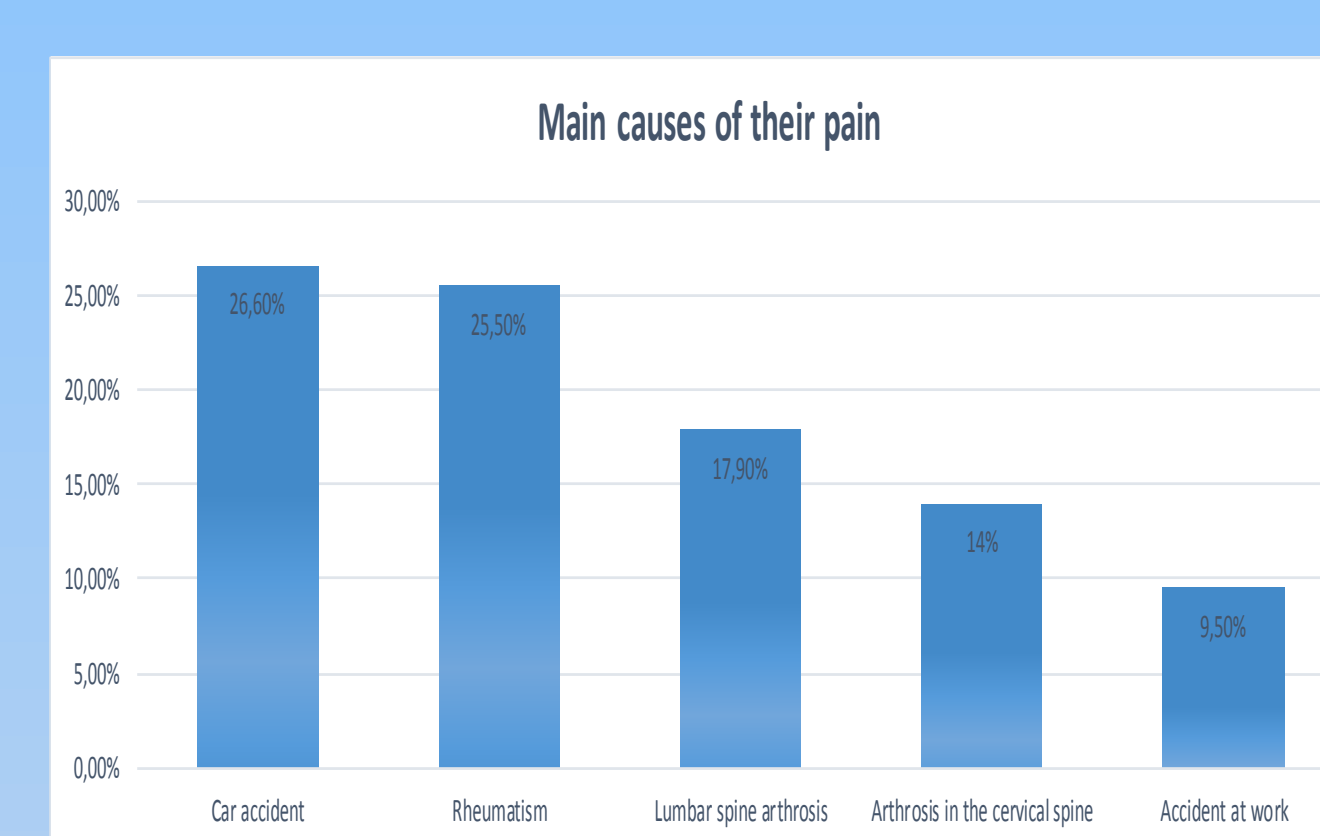


Figure 2

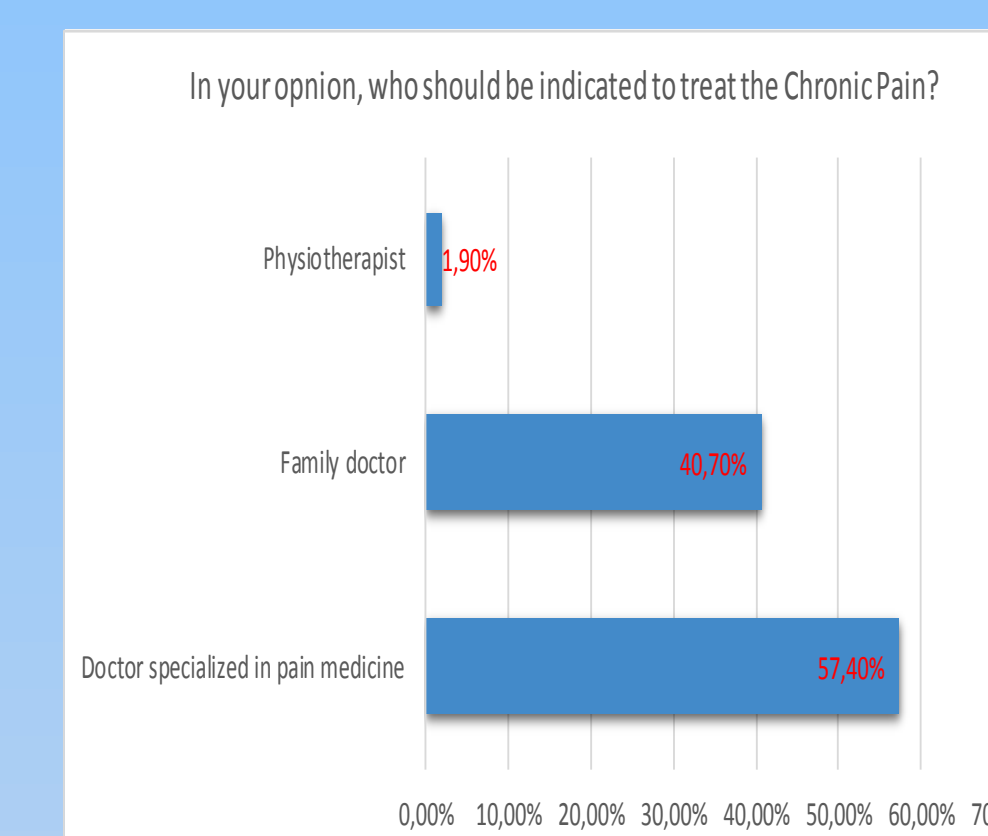


Figure 3

Causes of pain	Sex		Age group			
	Female	Male	18 to 35 years	36 to 50 years	51 to 70 years	Over 70 years
Car accidents	22.3%	33.2%	37.7%	39.2%	14.9%	21.5%
Work accidents	6.9%	14.9%	22%	9%	5.7%	4.2%
Cervical spine arthrosis	15.6%	11.2%	10.1%	10.6%	17.4%	16%
Lumbar spine arthrosis	20.8%	12.4%	8.8%	12.7%	24.5%	21.5%
Rheumatism	26.3%	25.2%	18.2%	24.3%	29.1%	28.5%

Table 1

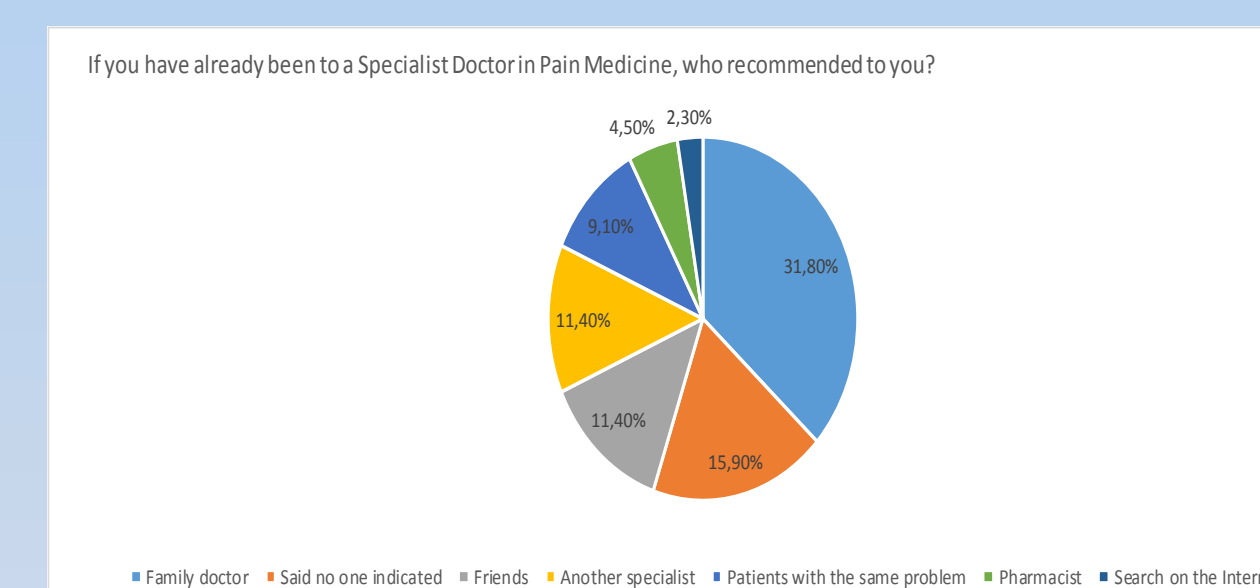


Figure 4

Satisfied	39,10%
Very satisfied	36,80%
Little satisfied	20,70%
Nothing satisfied	1,10%

Table 2

- Figure 5: Are you still treating your pain?
- Table 3: Do you think that Chronic Pain should be recognized as an illness that needs medical treatment and health support? (Answered only by 212 (36.5%) respondents)

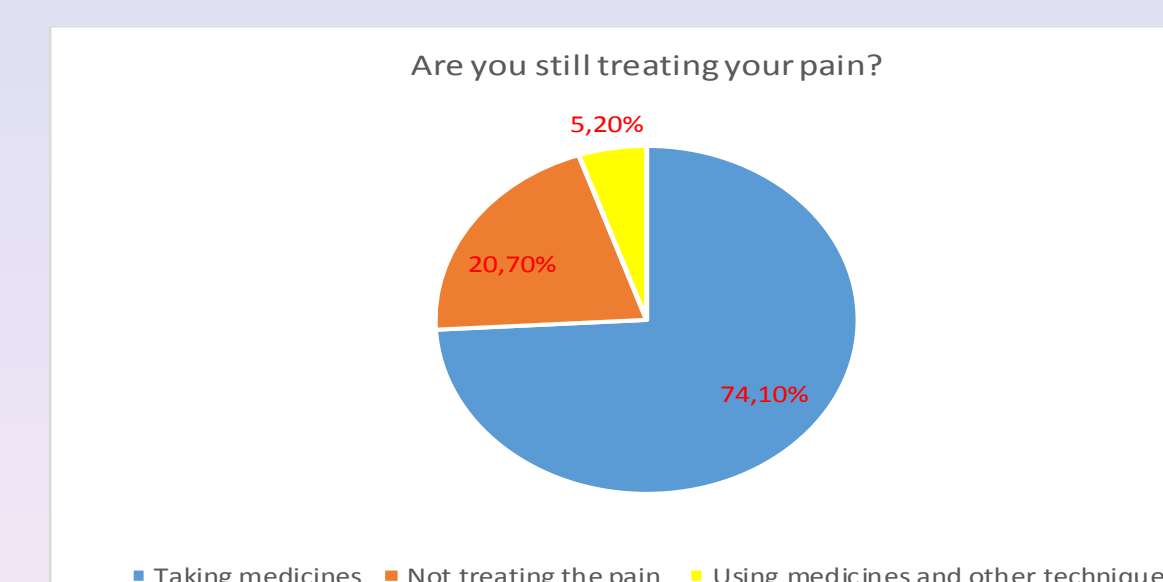


Figure 5

No	66%
Yes	32,50%
Did not know	1,50%

Table 3

DISCUSSION

Sampling was random, most responders were female and gave us a high percentage of respondents, more than half, suffering from chronic pain; moreover, almost half knew someone (more familiar) who suffered from Chronic Pain. This is a higher percentage, comparing with a cross-sectional nationwide epidemiological study by *Azevedo et als*, where Chronic Pain was a significant problem in **Portugal** being present in **37% of the adult general population**.

As in literature, the cause of pain in more aged people is osteoarticular disease.

Our responders think that the most indicated to treat pain is the specialist in Pain Medicine, they were satisfied with treatment with medicines (**75.9%**) and were referred by the family doctors.

Only less than half of the sample answered to the question of Chronic Pain as a disease and only one third agree with it.

CONCLUSIONS

Our sample:

- has a higher prevalence of pain,
- is referred to Pain Medicine specialists,
- is satisfied (75.9%) with pharmacological treatment.

It seems that family doctors need education about treatment to reduce referrals, public needs to know more about Chronic Pain and self management to reduce pharmacological medication and decision makers need to organize more multidisciplinary teams.

REFERENCES

<https://www.fondazioneisal.it/>

Azevedo L, Costa-Pereira A, Mendonça L, Dias C, Castro-Lopes JM. Epidemiology of Chronic Pain: A Population-Based Nationwide Study on Its Prevalence, Characteristics and Associated Disability in Portugal. *J. Pain* 13 (2012) 773-783