

Pain in Australia *

In 2020



3.37 million Australians lived with chronic pain.
This is set to rise to 5.23 million by 2050



44.6% of people with chronic pain also live with depression and anxiety



20% of all GP presentations in Australia involve chronic pain

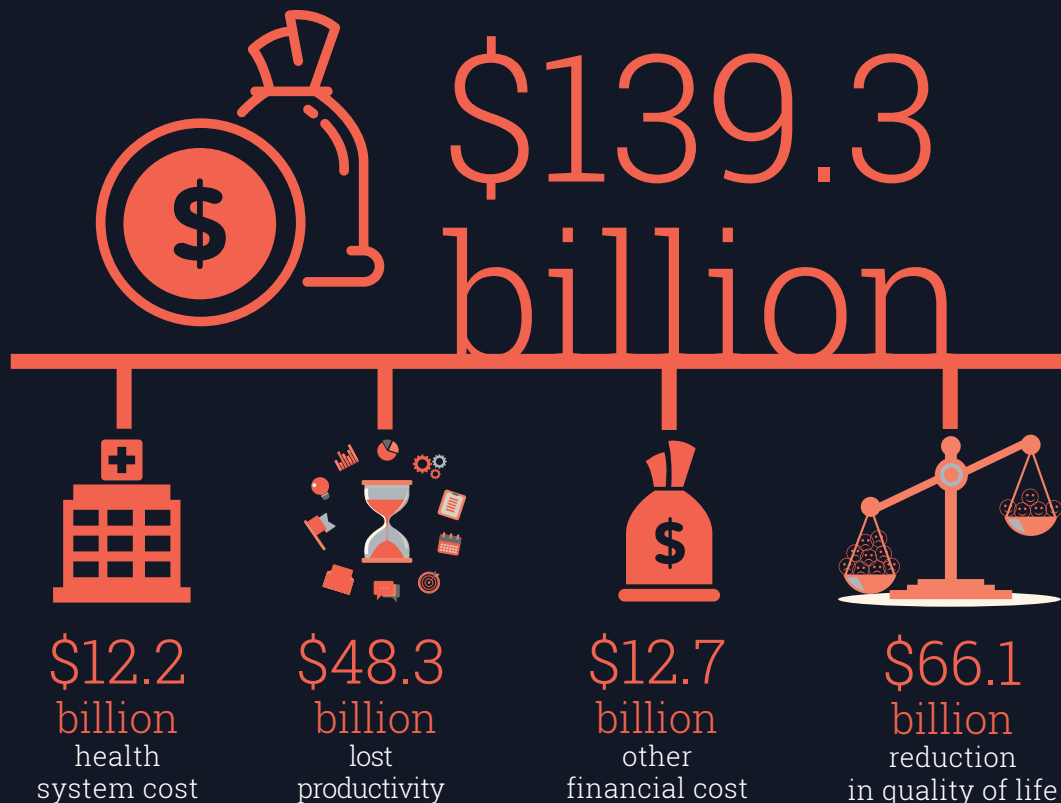


Medications are used in close to **70%** of GP consultations for chronic pain management



Referrals to pain specialists occur in less than **15%** of GP consultations where pain is managed

FINANCIAL COST



Addressing Australia's pain

Who we are

Painaustralia is Australia's peak body working to improve the quality of life of people living with pain, their families and carers, and to minimise the social and economic burden of pain on individuals and the community. Clinicians, researchers, consumers, families and others seeking to support people with chronic pain, including governments, are all involved in the work of Painaustralia.

What we are striving to achieve

Our vision is that pain is a national health priority, and Australians living with pain or at risk of pain-related disability, their families and carers, can access credible information and a world-class system of care.

The Issues

There are 3.37 million Australians living with pain conditions. Ongoing chronic pain has a devastating impact on individuals, their families and society as whole. It affects the quality of lives of many Australians and has an enormous impact on their capacity to work, function and live well. The economic impact of chronic pain was a staggering \$73.2 billion in 2018 or \$22,588 per person with chronic pain. One of the biggest costs is lost productivity including early retirement from the workforce.

Pain underpins much of the burden of disease across the chronic disease spectrum. Comorbidities including mental health - depression and suicide - are strongly associated with chronic pain. Half of all chronic pain conditions involve a mental health condition.

Most Australians living with pain are currently unable to access best practice pain assessment and management, whether due to cost, location, low awareness of treatment options, or lack of access to health professionals with knowledge and skills in pain management.

The typical experience is that as the pain becomes increasingly intense and persistent, the first clinical intervention will be with a doctor who is most likely to prescribe strong painkillers, which in many cases can make the pain worse over the longer term as well as creating dependency and other problems.

The experts agree about what good pain treatment and management looks like, but that is not what most people experience. All this suffering translates into enormous health, social and economic costs in every community across Australia.

The solution

As the peak national organisation that has led the development of the National Pain Strategy and its blueprint, the National Strategic Action Plan for Pain Management, Painaustralia is committed to working with our clinician and consumer members to lead the advocacy, research and policy effort needed to make a difference in the lives of Australians living with pain and their families and carers.

A crucial part of our work is to reach out and engage with the millions of Australians experiencing pain but not aware of how to get effective treatment. Painaustralia is committed to ensuring more Australians receive appropriate treatment for their pain – not by offering pain treatment, but by giving people with pain the information they need to access best practice care and treatment.

The logo for Painaustralia, featuring the word "pain" in red and "australia" in black, both in a lowercase sans-serif font.

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