

Assessment and Management of Chronic Non-Oncological Pain in Primary Health Care Service of Albania: Data from Clinical Practice

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Abstract

Background: Chronic non-oncological pain (CNCP) is defined as moderate to severe pain lasting six months or longer, including conditions such as neuropathic pain, osteoarthritis, and fibromyalgia. CNCP negatively impacts patients' daily functioning and emotional well-being, posing challenges for healthcare systems.

Methods: This study evaluated the assessment and management practices of CNCP among 117 primary healthcare professionals in Albania from Tirana and Vlora during January–March 2025. Participants included 36.8% nurses, 48.7% other professionals (psychologists, physiotherapists), and mainly females (86.3%) working mostly in urban centers (84.6%).

Results: The most common pain types treated

were back/neck pain, joint pain, and headaches. Treatment primarily relied on non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and paracetamol, while only a minority reported regular use of multidisciplinary care. Knowledge and use of standardized pain assessment tools were limited. Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.001$) were observed between professions regarding the frequency of multidisciplinary care and methods to evaluate treatment effectiveness.

Conclusion: Findings indicate CNCP care in Albanian primary healthcare is inconsistent and underdeveloped, which calls for improved training, standardized protocols, and enhanced interprofessional collaboration. A multidimensional approach with early

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intervention and greater access to specialist services is essential to improve CNCP outcomes and reduce its burden on patients and health systems.

Keywords: Chronic non-oncological pain, primary healthcare, pain assessment, multidisciplinary care, treatment management, DJO KRON project.