

Research Project Title: *Overcoming Osteoarthritis Pain: Lived Experiences of Black and White Canadians During the COVID-19 Pandemic*

We wanted to know:

What are the lived experiences and daily impacts of hip and knee osteoarthritis-related pain in Black and White Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic? Rather than comparing races, the goal was to articulate a comprehensive range of experiences.

What is the problem:

COVID-19 made it harder for people to get care for their osteoarthritis (OA) and worsened existing inequities in pain treatment. Since the pandemic started, 1 in 3 Canadians with chronic pain report worsened pain. Black people tend to have more severe OA but are 2-5 times less likely to receive proper pain management.

How did you study the problem:

We used Interpretive Description to understand OA pain experiences. We conducted virtual interviews with 30 people (15 Black, 15 White) aged 45+ who met clinical criteria for hip and knee OA. We recruited diverse participants through multiple channels and explored how pain affected their daily activities. Interviews were systematically analyzed to identify key themes.

What did you find:

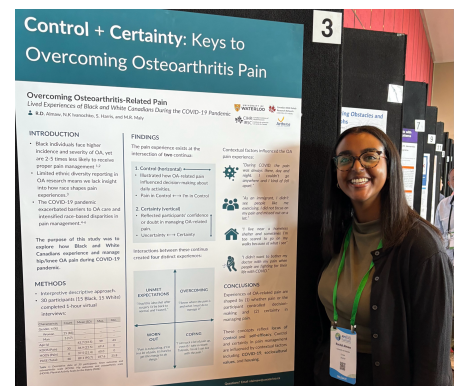
People described their OA pain experiences through two main factors: control and certainty. **Control** was about whether a person could make their own choices or whether pain dictated what they could do. When in control, people could still do activities they valued by adapting to their limitations. When not in control, pain restricted their daily choices. **Certainty** reflected confidence in managing health. Some felt sure about handling their pain due to effective strategies and good healthcare relationships, while others felt uncertain about managing pain and their future quality of life.

How can this research be used?

This research helps us understand what people with OA need, especially those facing barriers to care. Understanding these experiences can help healthcare providers better support all patients and develop strategies that increase patients' sense of control and certainty.

Cautions:

Findings highlight how personal factors, cultural backgrounds, and pandemic conditions all influenced pain experiences. Low health literacy increased uncertainty for many participants. These results emphasize the importance of strong healthcare provider relationships in building patient confidence and shifting control from external factors to internal management strategies.



References: Journal article, in press

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