



Pain

Volume 105, Issues 1–2, September 2003, Pages 363–370

Role loss and emotional adjustment in chronic pain

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-3959\(03\)00251-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-3959(03)00251-3)

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Abstract

Chronic pain interrupts behaviour, interferes with functioning, and may affect a person's identity: their sense of self. We tested whether loss of role and personal attributes and current and past self-concept differentiation, predicted adjustment as indexed by measures of depression. Chronic pain patients ($n=80$) completed measures of pain (MPQ), disability (PDI), depression and anxiety (BDI, HADS). Measures of role and attribute loss and self-concept differentiation were derived from a Role-Attribute Test in which participants identified four social roles in four domains (friendship, occupation, leisure, family) and nominated two personal attributes in each role prior to pain onset and current. Participants reported mean losses of 3.38 roles, and 6.97 attributes. Greater losses were observed in friendship, occupation and leisure domains compared with the family domain. Multiple regression analyses revealed that after controlling for demographic and clinical differences, role and attribute loss predicted depression scores. There was no evidence that depression was associated with past self-concept differentiation. The results are discussed with reference to the methodology used and

differentiation. The results are discussed with reference to the methodology used and the relevance of self-identity to understand adjustment to chronic pain.



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Keywords

Social roles; Personal attributes; Chronic pain; Identity; Adjustment

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