The Journal of Pain

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Volume 15, Number 6, June 2014

Special Report

Despite rapidly increasing intervention, functional disability due to chronic low back pain (cLBP) has increased in recent decades. We often cannot identify mechanisms to explain the major negative impact that cLBP has on patients' lives. A task force was convened by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Pain Consortium, with the goal of developing research standards for cLBP. The results include recommendations for definitions, a minimum dataset, reporting outcomes, and future research. The Research Task Force believes that these recommendations will advance the field, help to resolve controversies, and facilitate future research addressing the genomic, neurologic, and other mechanistic substrates of cLBP.

ON THE COVER

Central neuropathic pain (CNP) is believed to be accompanied by increased activation of the sensorimotor cortex. This study compares the electroencephalography (EEG) activity of spinal cord–injured patients with CNP to that of spinal cord–injured patients with no pain and also to that of able-bodied people. The study shows that the presence of CNP itself leads to frequency-specific EEG signatures that could be used to monitor CNP and inform neuromodulatory treatments of this type of pain. See Vuckovic et al, page 645.

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The Journal of Pain (ISSN 1526-5900) is published monthly by Elsevier Inc., 360 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010-1710. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Journal of Pain, Elsevier Health Sciences Division, Subscription Customer Service, 3251 Riverport Lane, Maryland Heights, MO 63043.

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