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CHRONIC AND COMPLEX PAIN IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN MANITOBA – A RETROSPECTIVE CHART REVIEW

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Background:

About 10,000 children are affected by chronic pain in Manitoba. Manitoba remains the only province in Canada with a university-affiliated hospital without a funded multidisciplinary pain treatment facility (MPTF) for pediatric chronic pain. Since October 2015, a pediatric rheumatologist has provided care in a limited, non-funded chronic pain clinic with restricted consultative service from physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

Objective:

The objective of this study was to characterize the patient population within this clinic and analyze wait times in order to quantify the need for a MPTF.

Methods:

Patients included in this retrospective review were less than 18 years of age referred to the chronic pain clinic for youth at the Children's Hospital in Winnipeg between October 1, 2015 and December 31, 2018. Data was collected from electronic medical charts between May-August 2019 and entered into REDcap. Ten percent of the charts were reviewed by a second person. Data was analyzed using SPSS Inc., version 25.

Results:

A total of 158 patients between 4 and 17 years of age (median 14 years, 75.3% female) entered the clinic. The average amount of referrals per month increased from 2 in 2015 to 5 in 2018. Patients experienced pain on average for 30.5 months (SD 29.9) prior to their first visit; their mean wait time was 69.5 days (SD 59.0) with patients seen in 2019 with a mean wait time of 163.7 days (SD 76.1). During this period, 74.0% of patients had difficulties with sleep, 76.6% had daytime fatigue, 86.5% experienced symptoms of anxiety, 58.6% had symptoms of depression, and 80.3% had withdrawal from physical activity.

Conclusion:

The significant physical and mental comorbidities in this patient population in addition to the increasing demand of the chronic pain clinic strongly suggests the necessity to establish a pediatric MPTF in Manitoba