

## Trends in Pain Prevalence among Older Adults in the United States: 1992 to 2012

To be presented at the IAGG World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics on July 25, 2017, session entitled "Disability, Chronic Conditions, and Pain," 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Check the program for further details.

### Abstract

This analysis will first examine population trends in pain prevalence amongst older Americans across a twenty-year period and second assess the degree to which these trends are explained by changing socio-demographic composition and health characteristics. Pain is an important indicator of overall health among older adults and is related to many physical and psychosomatic conditions and disorders. While specific sources and proximate causes are not easy to identify, the negative consequences of pain for functional health are evident. Consequently, understanding trends in pain allows insight into changes in quality of life. Moreover, despite increased literature on trends in disability and other functional health disorders, few studies have monitored whether pain trends correspond with these. This study relies on over 150,000 observations from the Health and Retirement Study. This is an ideal data source since pain items have been measured consistently across most survey waves from 1992 to 2012. Deconstructing pain into mild, moderate and severe forms, the paper first evaluates trends in any and severity of pain over time. Preliminary results indicate rising trends for both males and females. Using binary and ordered logistic regression, the analysis then examines predictors of these rising trends. The conclusion will compare trends and predictors to the much more established literature on disability. In sum, despite presence of pain items in several national level surveys, little research has monitored trends over time, and as an indicator of population health, pain has been virtually ignored. The current study fills this gap.

