



Chronic Pain
AUSTRALIA

Pain is Not Invisible Survey — what has changed since 2009?

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Two surveys nine years apart compare the experiences of people living with pain from 2008 to 2017.

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7/1/2017

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Background

Two surveys were completed nine years apart to identify differences in experience of Australians living with chronic pain.

The first Pain is Not Invisible survey ran for two years from August 2008 to August 2010. The second ran for one month in June 2017. There were 760 respondents to the first survey and 730 to the second. The survey can be seen in Appendix 1.

1. Age of participants

There was little difference in the age of participants. People aged 45-55 most frequently report chronic pain.

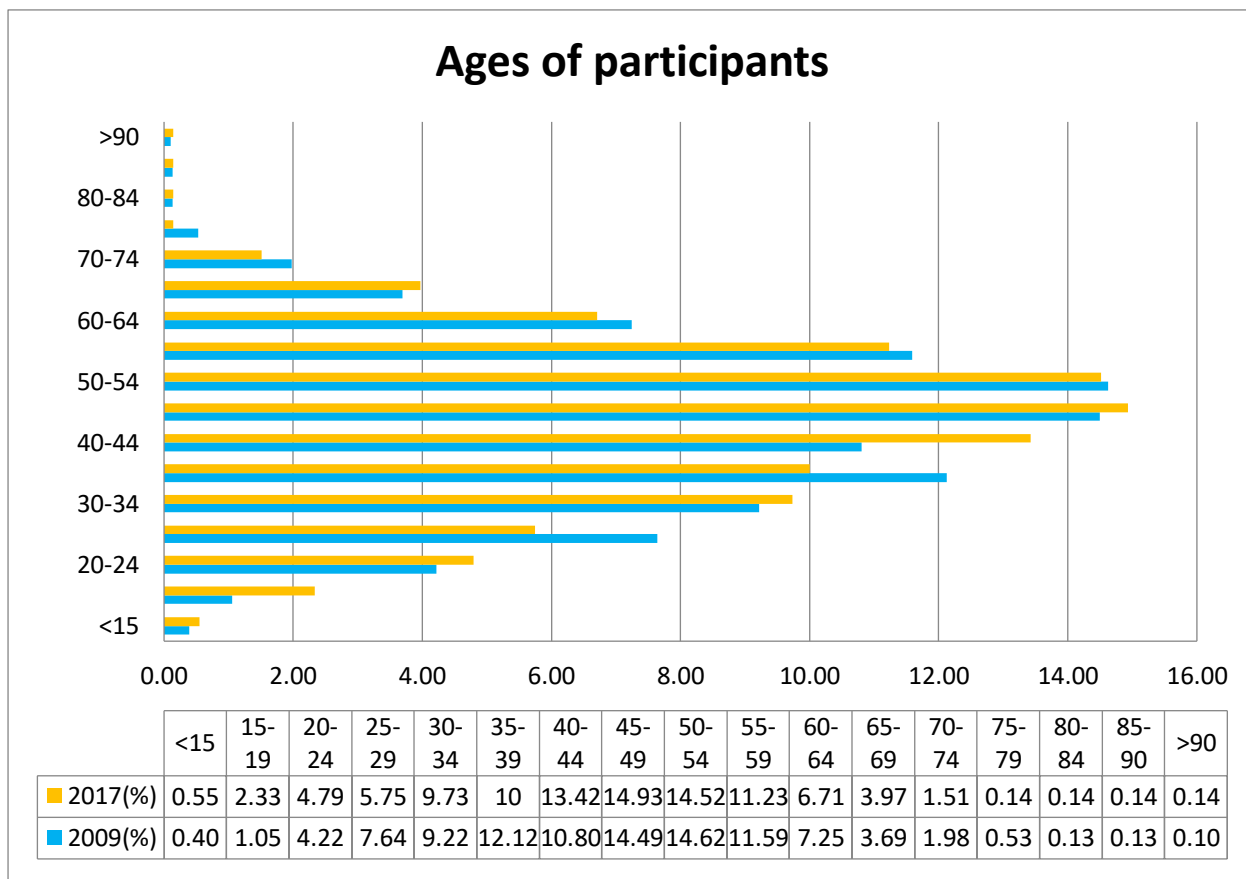


Figure 1:

Ages of participants

2. Gender

More women than men responded to the survey in 2017

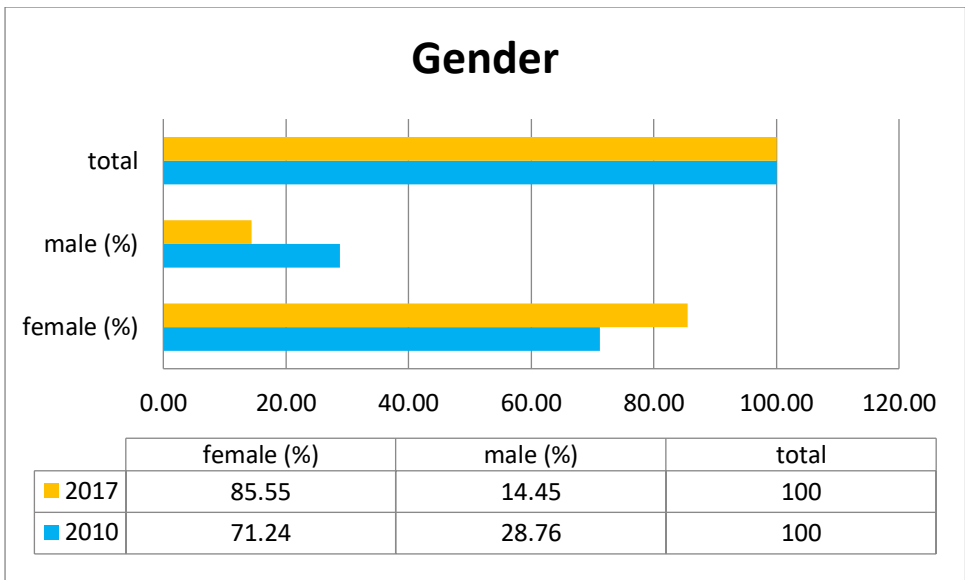


Figure 2: Gender of participants

3. Postcode

See map – Stella is creating

4. Duration of pain

In both surveys the highest number of participants have lived with pain for more than ten years.

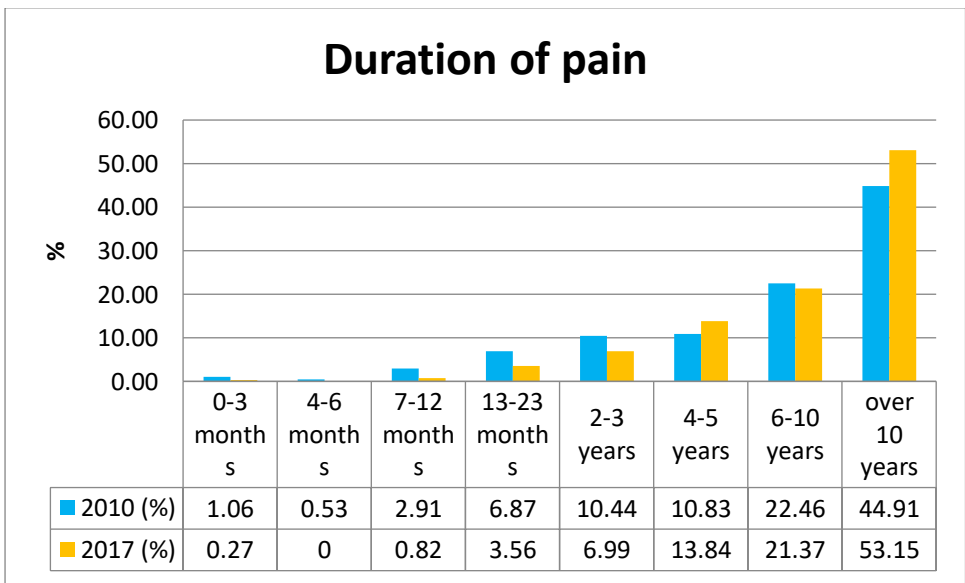


Figure 3: Duration of pain

5. One word to describe pain

The top ten words used to describe 2010 can be seen in Figure 4 below. Figure 5 captures those from 2017. The words used to describe pain have remained the same: Debilitating, Frustrating and Exhausting. Interestingly, “debilitating” describes the limitation on function, “frustrating” describes the emotional result of pain, and “exhausting” describes the effect of pain on available energy. None of these words would be considered to be the language of “catastrophizing”, notwithstanding the idea that people in pain often express “catastrophic” ways of thinking.

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%) ▾	Similar Words
debilitating	12	63	7.83	debilitating
frustrating	11	40	4.97	frustrated, frustrating, frustration
exhausting	10	30	3.73	exhausted, exhausting, exhaustive
depressive	10	27	3.35	depressed, depressing, depressive
hell	4	24	2.98	hell
constant	8	23	2.86	constant
life	4	22	2.73	life
relentless	10	19	2.36	relentless
annoying	8	18	2.24	annoying
tiring	6	18	2.24	tireing, tiring

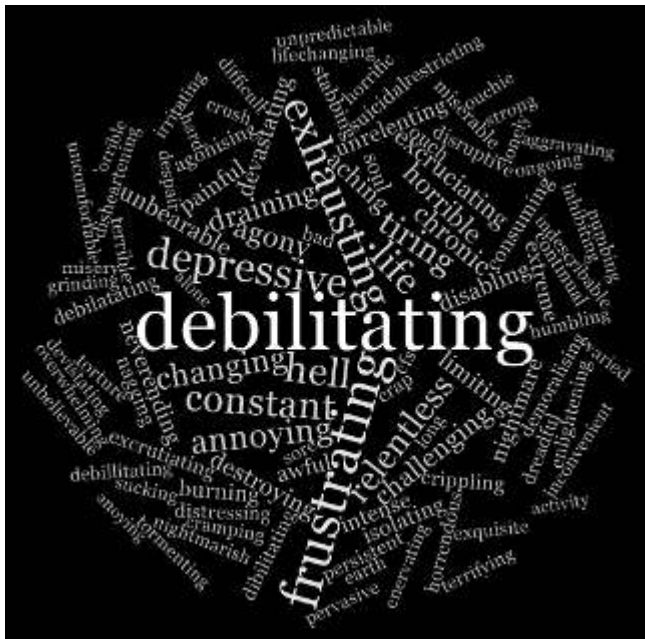
Figure 4: Word to describe pain in 2010

In 2017

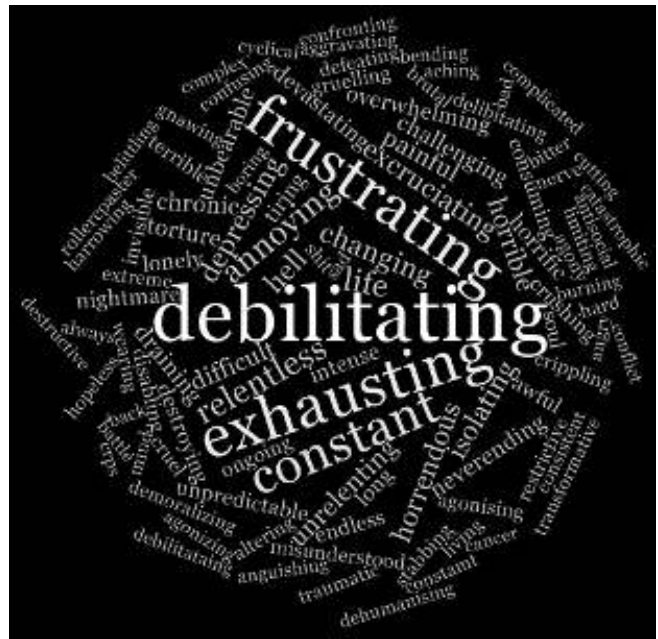
Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%) ▾	Similar Words
debilitating	12	79	10.19	debilitating
frustrating	11	59	7.61	frustrating
exhausting	10	58	7.48	exhausted, exhausting, exhaustion
constant	8	45	5.81	constant
annoying	8	21	2.71	annoying
relentless	10	21	2.71	relentless
life	4	19	2.45	life
changing	8	15	1.94	changing
depressing	10	15	1.94	depressing
excruciating	12	14	1.81	excruciating

Figure 5: Word to describe pain in 2017

Word clouds – comparison



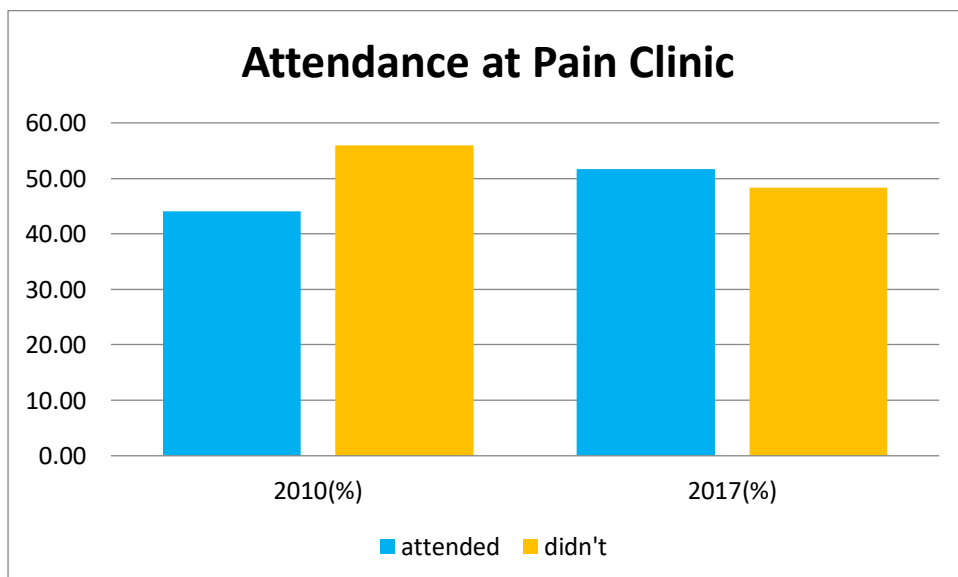
2010



2017

6. Intensity of pain
7. Frequency of pain
8. Pain interruption of daily activities
9. Cause of pain
10. Location of pain
11. Impact on work
12. Involvement in workers compensation
13. Involvement in motor accident compensation
14. Diagnosis
15. Understanding of diagnosis
16. What does your doctor think you should do now?
17. Attendance at a pain clinic

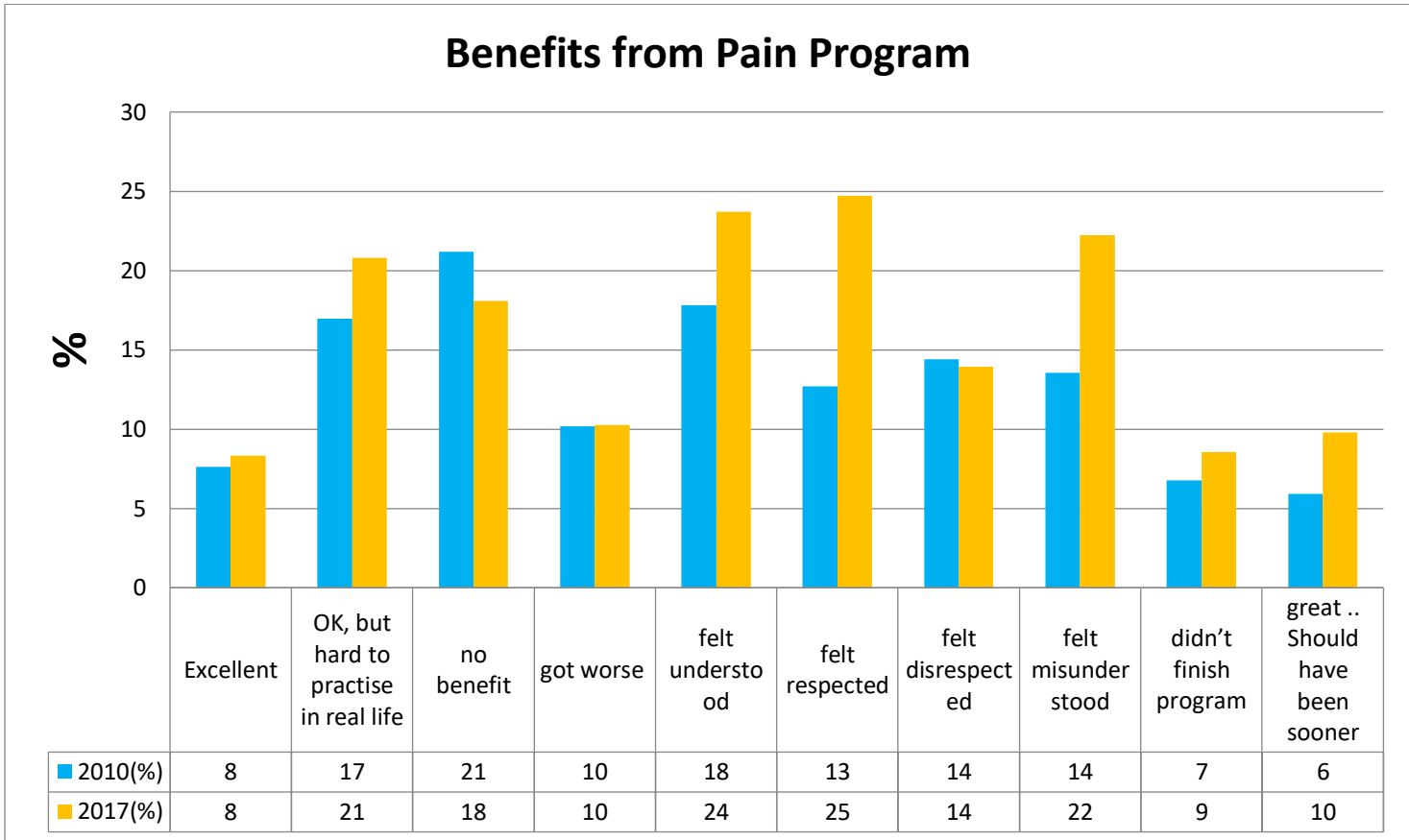
There were 252 respondents in 2010 and 730 in 2017. Attendance at pain clinics is more frequent in 2017 in this group of respondents.



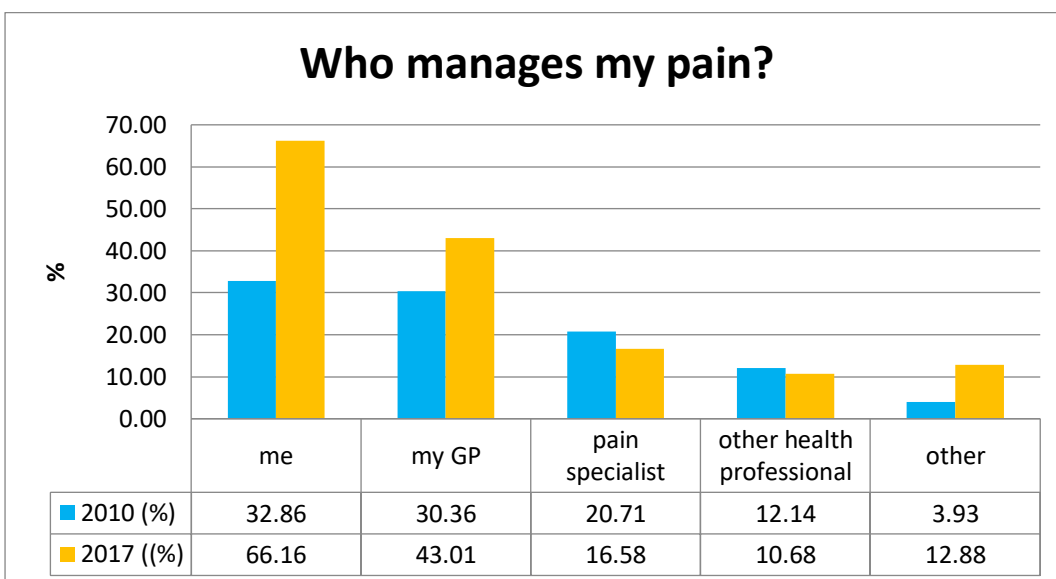
18. Clinics attended

19. Benefits of attending a clinic

People in 2017 feel better about pain clinics. They feel more understood and yet the same number of people feel misunderstood in their interactions with pain clinics. Many more feel that these programs should be offered earlier. More people are benefiting from pain clinics than in 2010. Of concern is that the same % of people have achieved no benefit as a result of their interaction with pain clinics.

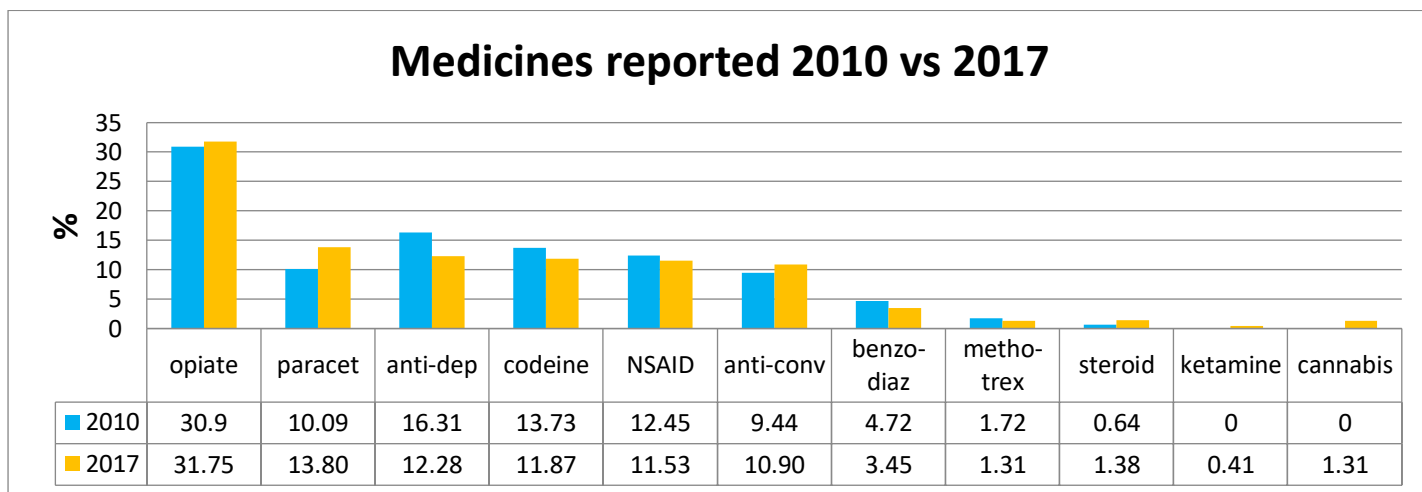


20. Primary manager of pain



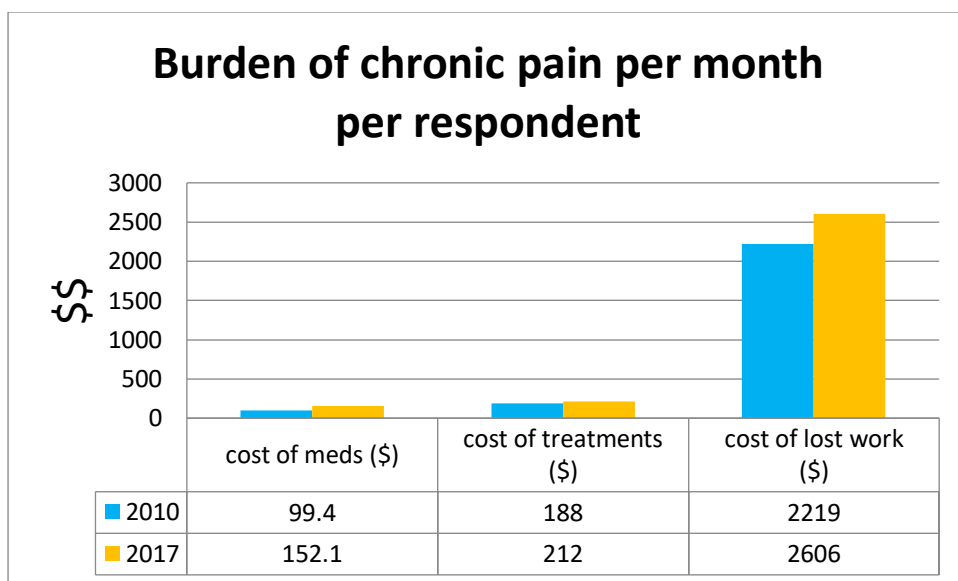
21. Treatments for pain

22. Medicines used for pain



23. The burden of chronic pain

Estimated cost of medicines, treatments and lost work per month



24. Pain stories

Appendix 1: the survey