

Chronic Pain in the Medicare Population

This infographic describes experiences with chronic pain reported by Medicare beneficiaries living in the community. These preliminary estimates are based on the 2018 Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS). Chronic pain is defined as the reporting of at least some pain in the last three months.

FREQUENCY OF PAIN

78% of all Medicare beneficiaries experience chronic pain



82% of female beneficiaries experience chronic pain compared to 74% of male beneficiaries



89% of beneficiaries under 65¹ experience chronic pain compared to 77% of older beneficiaries

¹ Eligible for Medicare due to disability

LOCATION OF PAIN

(of those who report at least some chronic pain)

83% of beneficiaries experience chronic pain in more than one location



Most common locations:

79%



Hips, knees, or feet

75%



Back

69%



Hands, arms, or shoulders

LIMITATIONS CAUSED BY PAIN

(of those who report at least some chronic pain)



Over half (57%) of beneficiaries say their chronic pain limits their lives or work



One-third of beneficiaries say their chronic pain affects their family or significant others



Less than 10% of beneficiaries say chronic pain stops them from doing things they enjoy

PAIN MANAGEMENT

(of those who report at least some chronic pain)

36% of beneficiaries use at least one non-medication pain management technique



Most common techniques:



14%

Physical, rehabilitative, or occupational therapy



12%

Meditation, guided imagery, or other relaxation techniques



10%

Massage

The MCBS is a nationally representative survey of Medicare beneficiaries sponsored by the Office of Enterprise Data and Analytics (OEDA) of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Estimates represent the population of beneficiaries who were ever enrolled in Medicare in 2018 and were still enrolled in summer 2019. The dataset included 7,884 beneficiaries (weighted N= 55,168,565). These estimates use preliminary 2018 MCBS Survey File data and are produced prior to final data editing and final weighting to provide early access to the most recent information from the MCBS.