

Adversity & Resilience Among Older Adults Living With Chronic Pain

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01. Background

Within the limited literature examining adversity among older adults with chronic pain, studies have focused on sexual abuse as an adverse childhood experience but have not examined emotional and physical abuse in addition to sexual abuse. Secondly, limited research has investigated other adverse childhood events such as emotional and physical neglect.

02. Objective

Examine the role of childhood abuse and neglect on pain-related outcomes among older adults.

03. Methods

Participant recruitment ($N = 12$) & ($N = 14$) involved advertisements of the study purpose and inclusion criteria. Participants included Canadian older adults (i.e., at least 65 years of age) living with chronic pain. Participants were asked to complete a set of online questionnaires. Analyses involved a one-way ANOVAs for each type of abuse.

04a. Results

Preliminary analyses indicated the following results (Table 1):

1. Childhood physical abuse was significantly associated with activity engagement, pain willingness, pain self-efficacy, and pain resilience
2. Childhood emotional abuse was significantly associated with activity engagement, pain self-efficacy, and pain resilience, but not pain willingness
3. Childhood sexual abuse was not significantly associated with activity engagement, pain willingness, pain self-efficacy, or pain resilience

04b. Results

Preliminary results show that, among older adults, participants who experienced childhood physical abuse had significantly lower levels of activity engagement, pain willingness, pain self-efficacy, and pain resilience compared to participants who had not experienced childhood physical neglect (Figure 1); participants who experienced childhood emotional neglect experienced significantly lower levels of activity engagement, pain self-efficacy, and pain resilience compared to participants who had not experienced childhood emotional neglect (Figure 2); and participants who did and did not experience physical neglect (Figure 3) or emotional neglect (Figure 4) did not significantly differ with regards to pain severity, pain-related distress, or pain-related interference.

IMPORTANT!
Results are preliminary, so caution should be taken when interpreting these results.

05. Implications

Older adults with chronic pain who experienced childhood emotional and physical abuse or neglect may present for treatment with reduced willingness or ability to engage in activities of importance to their well-being. Positive screens for childhood emotional and physical abuse may identify opportunities to address some of the psychosocial variables influencing outcomes of pain management interventions.

06. Future Directions

In contrast to existing literature, childhood sexual abuse was not significantly associated with pain-related outcomes, but given the preliminary nature of these findings, more research is needed. A larger sample size will be needed in order to better explore the indicated results. More attention needs to be given to the ways in which childhood abuse can be addressed through psychological treatment within the context of chronic pain treatment.

07. References

- Burhmann & Fuller-Thomson (2022). *Aging Health Res*, 2, 100088.
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Table 1

	Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Sexual Abuse
Activity Engagement	.720*	.740**	.184
Pain Willingness	.631*	.595	.270
Pain Self-Efficacy	.764**	.756**	.231
Pain Resilience	.637*	.636*	-.309

Figure 1

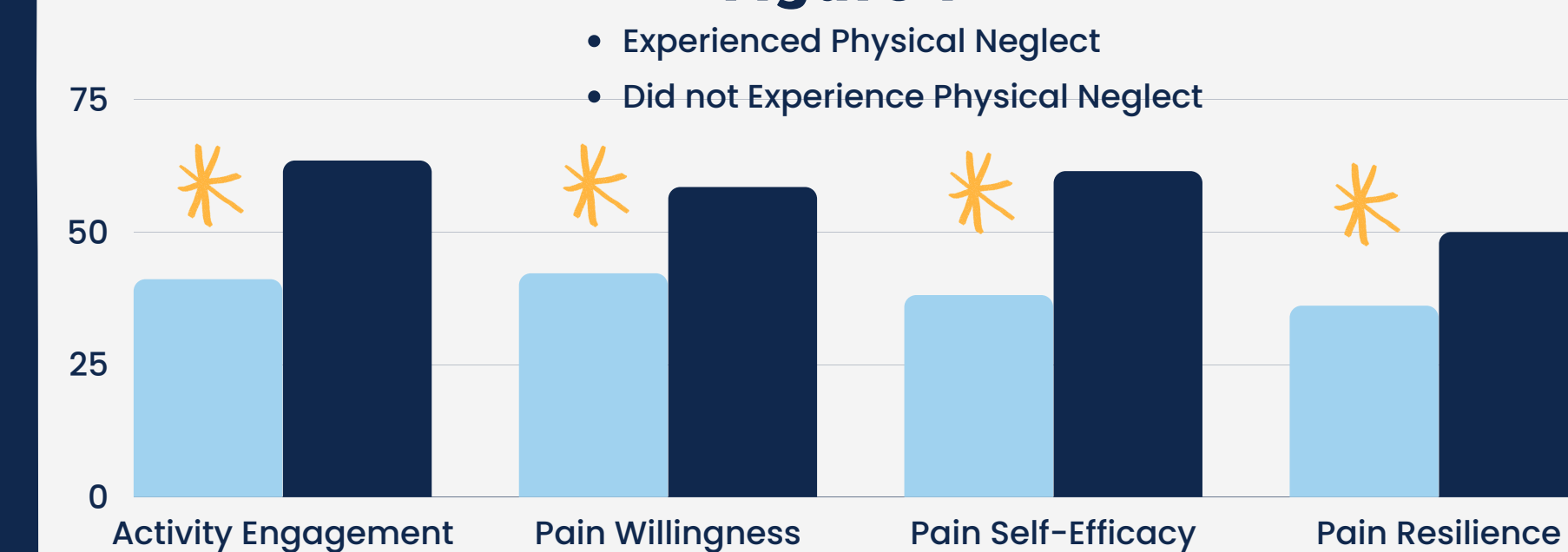


Figure 2



Figure 3

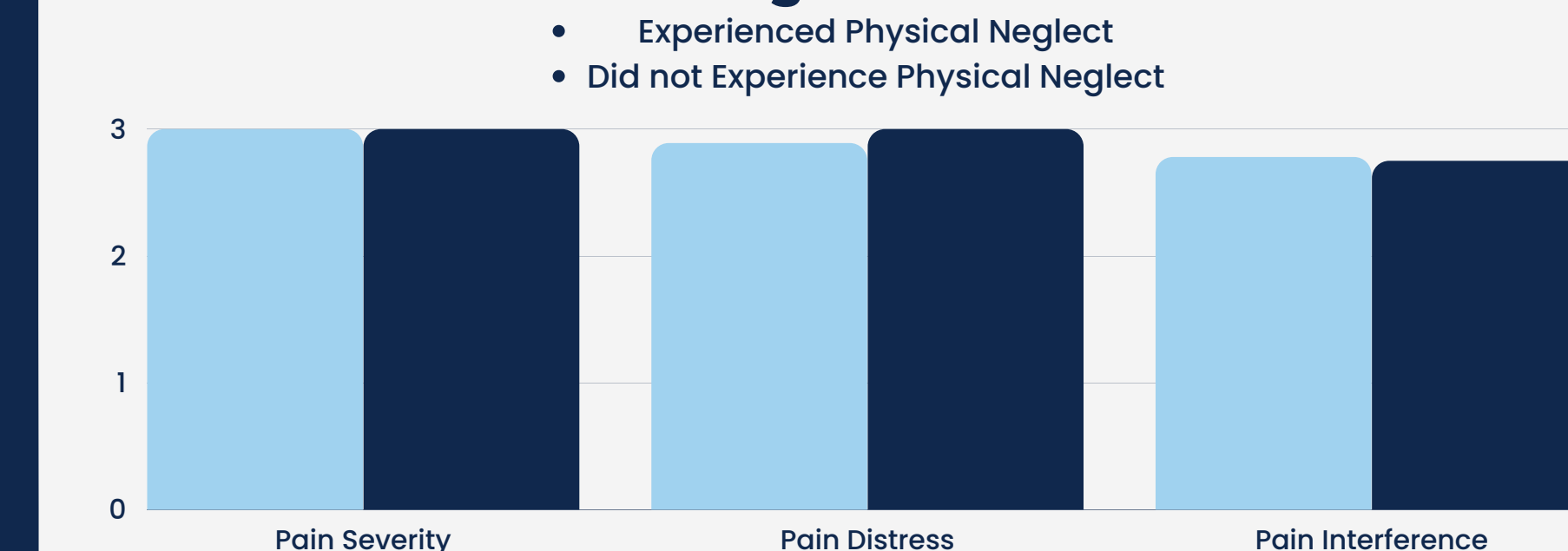


Figure 4

