



Help Hope Learning



*American Chronic Pain Association®*



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# Topical Cream Survey



# Access to Care

**Pain care today is difficult if not impossible to obtain**

- ❖ PWP taking **opioids** are often **denied** care
- ❖ **Alternative treatments** are expensive and not always covered by insurance
- ❖ Interdisciplinary **pain management programs** are few and expensive
- ❖ Lack of **provider education** in pain management limits provider options



# Stigma of Pain

**People living with pain are dealing with the pain as well as the stigma**

- ✿ **Validation** of ones pain can be critical to their success in managing the pain
- ✿ We have a difficult time **believing what we cannot see**, measure or validate
- ✿ **On-again-off-again** nature of pain is confusing for all
- ✿ When treatment is **declared successful** but **pain persist** what recourse does PWP have?
- ✿ Hearing it is **all in your head**
- ✿ PWP feeling as if **they are weak** because they have unmanageable pain



# Stigma

**Stigma—shaming and shunning—continues to befall patients with chronic pain, as do inequities in access to care.**



# Where Do They Turn?

Survey of 1000 PWP who take an opioid for pain management

- ❖ Those denied opioids often turn to the streets
- ❖ 56% of 1000 PWP surveyed said they have **trouble** obtaining their medications even when they have a **prescription in hand**
- ❖ Heartbreakingly, 47%---almost half---have **considered ending their pain permanently**
- ❖ **88% go to the Internet** for information regarding things to try
- ❖ While **95% have tried some kind of topical cream or oil**, only 6% received a recommendation from their HCP to try these products



# ACPA Topical Cream Survey

Many people living with pain find it difficult to get relief. While there are many different therapies and treatments, we are interested in knowing if you use any type of topical (skin) cream as part of your pain treatment.

- Total Responses 469
- Complete Responses: 406



# Demographics

- Of the PWP survived, 77% were female
- 90% were white or Caucasian while only 11% represented minorities
- 67% were married
- 55% had a college degree or higher
- The respondents were equally distributed throughout the country.





# Topical Pain Creams

- 66% had pain for more than 10 years.
- 87% use a skin cream (topical) to help manage pain
- 45% of those use a prescription topical pain cream as part of their overall pain treatment



# Topical Pain Creams

- 53% use OTC creams
- 70% obtain from retail pharmacy while only 16% use compound pharmacy
- Interestingly, 14% did not know if the pharmacy was a compounding pharmacy
- 64% pay out of pocket with 13% paying between \$100 to \$500 a month



# Topical Pain Creams

How long does it take to feel relief once you rub it on your skin?



- 👁 Only 9% got immediate relief
- 👁 The majority felt relief within 15 to 30 minutes.
- 👁 30% needed to reapply their cream every 4 to 6 hours with relief only last between 2 to 4 hours.



# Topical Pain Creams

**What would you say the amount of relief you receive from your pain cream?**

- 🕒 More than 50% only received between 10 to 25% relief
- 🕒 Less than 1% received 100% relief from their cream
- 🕒 30% found between 25 to 50% by using their topical pain cream



# Topical Pain Creams

Do you experience any side effects from your pain skin cream?

- 👁 89% reported no side effects from using a topical pain cream

**NO  
Side  
Effects**



# Topical Pain Creams

**Do you experience any side effects from your pain skin cream?**

- 🌿 10% of those surveyed experienced side effect. The majority of those who had side effects, over 55% experience burning and redness
- 🌿 Other side effects were
  - 🌿 Itching 33%
  - 🌿 Rash 33%
  - 🌿 Swelling 14%
  - 🌿 Numbness 10%





# Comments

- ❖ If you have a pet, you have to make sure they can't lick the area in which it's applied
- ❖ I cannot think of going without it
- ❖ Not practical to use on arthritic hands because of hand washing and the possibility of touching eyes.



# Comments

## Prescription creams

- 💡 I use Voltaren gel, which is not very effective. It is my understanding that in other countries, they can get Ibuprofen cream, which appears to be much more effective. We need new and better alternatives to treat chronic pain conditions like mine
- 💡 I've nicknamed Voltaren "Wonder Gel."
- 💡 Lidocaine mix creams seem to work best.
- 💡 It does help with spasms.
- 💡 Nice for my psoriatic arthritis





# Side Effects

- ❖ Any capsaicin creams burn like crazy during the summer here in the south. The least little sweat its burning.
- ❖ It burns my fingers so badly that I can't use it on my hands.
- ❖ I have found that the side effects of the topical pain cream (redness, swelling) outweigh the benefits (a very short relief of the pain) so I don't use the topical pain cream anymore.
- ❖ Its pretty much worthless-and when it gets hot or humid here, its **TOTALLY** worthless as it runs or melts



# Side Effects

- ❖ Redness depends on how frequently I need to use once a day versus all day
- ❖ Compound cream I tried still caused allergic reactions and side effects as did the oral meds. My Dr. said it wouldn't.



# Cost

- ❖ I use this cream on my knee and other sore joints. I was on a compounded cream but insurance quit paying for it and I could not afford the monthly cost
- ❖ Most of the prescription medications were not covered by insurance
- ❖ The cream was very helpful while I was able to get it, but my insurance company stopped coverage on all compounded creams
- ❖ I was using lidocaine, but insurance stopped paying for it after 4 years, saying it was only for people with post herpetic neuralgia



# Cost

- ❖ I have used compounded cream which worked better but I can't afford it because insurance won't pay
- ❖ I also have tried and use CBD oil and cream/suave that is effective but cost is high like the compound cream
- ❖ I used to have lidocaine 5 percent patches but Medicare won't cover



# Cost

- Using a topical pain cream such as the compounding cream that I pay more than \$250 every 3 weeks to use has helped me avoid using narcotic pain medicine and because I have a complication with irritable bowel syndrome constipation, taking pain medicine is not really an option for me plus the compounding cream provides better relief in the areas that I have pain than a narcotic pain medicine



# Relief Time

- ⦿ Most of the time pain creams don't work. It gives you maybe an hour of lower pain
- ⦿ None of the OTC options are long-lasting or effective
- ⦿ My acupuncturist started using it on me and I saw immediate relief from the pain
- ⦿ I just started using a topical medical marijuana pain cream and it's amazing. It lasts longer, it takes away more pain and it's cheaper





# Access

- ❖ Help change law on vicuprofen. I took it for 18 month correct no abuse I respect law i am suffering right now
- ❖ My Dr. recommended I try CBO, it works better than compounded stuff from pharmacy
- ❖ I've tried a compound cream which worked wonders and lasted for a while. But my pain management office refuses to write rx's for compounds so I get stuck with the sucky 4% lidocaine cream
- ❖ I live in Mexico where many medicines are available without a doctor's scrip. I can buy over the counter several preparations which are prescription only in the US
- ❖ Use voltaren 1% \$60 with insurance. Can not buy 2% with insurance in US. Can buy voltaren 2% over the counter for \$12 in Mexico



**Thank you**  
American Chronic Pain  
Association  
[www.theacpa.org](http://www.theacpa.org)  
800.533.3231

