

**Treatment Expectancy in Individuals with Chronic Pain attending a Pain**

**Management Program**

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Author note:

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**List of Tables**

1	Frequency Data for Demographic Information.....	58
2	The Shapiro- Wilk Test Results of Normality for the Self-report Measures.....	59
3	z-scores of Skewness and Kurtosis for the Baseline Results of the Psychosocial Measures.....	60
4	Factor analysis based on Varimax Rotation for Active and Passive Treatment Expectancy at Pre and Post-program.....	63
5	Mean and standard deviation of the psychosocial measures over the four time points.....	65
6	Linear Mixed Model Mean Expectancy Scores for Passive and Active Treatment Strategies over time.....	65
7	Kendall Correlation Matrix for Predictor Variables at Pre treatment....	67
8	Linear Regression using Backward Method for Pre-program Expectancy for Passive Treatment Scores.....	69
9	Linear Regression using Backward Method for Pre-program Expectancy for Active Treatment Scores.....	70
10	Kendall Correlation Matrix for Pre and Post Scores on Poor Coping, Self-efficacy and Expectancy Scores for Passive Treatment Strategies.....	71
11	Kendall Correlation Matrix for Pre and Post Scores on Poor Coping, Self-efficacy and Expectancy Scores for Active Treatment Strategies.....	73

**List of Figures**

- 1      Loading Plots of Active and Passive Components within the Treatment  
Expectancy Questionnaire at Pre and Post-program.....62
- 2      Mean Standardized Scores for Poor Coping and Expectancy for Passive  
Treatment Strategies over time.....74

## Contents

Author note.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
List of Tables.....	4
List of Figures.....	5
Abstract.....	9
Introduction.....	10
Pain.....	11
Biopsychosocial Models of Pain.....	12
Psychosocial Variables and Pain.....	13
Treatment for Chronic Pain.....	25
Treatment Expectancy.....	30
Response Expectancy theory.....	35
The present study.....	39
Aims.....	41
Hypotheses.....	41
Method.....	42
Participants.....	42
Materials.....	42
Procedure.....	49
Data collection.....	53
Data analysis.....	54
Results.....	56
Demographics.....	56
Analysis of self-report measures.....	58

Hypothesis one.....	63
Hypothesis two.....	65
Hypothesis three.....	69
Hypothesis four.....	71
Discussion.....	75
Analysis of the Treatment Expectancy Questionnaire.....	75
Changes in treatment expectancy.....	76
Influence of psychosocial variables on treatment expectancy at pre- treatment.....	77
Poor coping and self-efficacy on treatment expectancy for passive treatment strategies following treatment.....	78
Poor coping and self-efficacy on treatment expectancy for active treatment strategies following treatment.....	80
Limitations of this research.....	82
Future direction.....	86
Clinical implications.....	87
References.....	93
Appendix A.....	115
A1.....	116
A2.....	118
A3.....	119
Appendix B.....	120
B1.....	121
B2.....	122
B3.....	123

B4.....	124
B5.....	126
B6.....	127
B7.....	128
Appendix C.....	130
Appendix D.....	135
Table D1.....	135
Table D2.....	135
Figure D1.....	136



## Abstract

The experience of chronic pain and subsequent treatment outcomes, as guided by the biopsychosocial models of pain, is influenced by both physical and psychosocial variables. The cognitive variable of expectancy requires further investigation within this population group. Treatment expectancy is a predictor of treatment outcome for people with chronic pain, both for active and passive treatment strategies. Multi-disciplinary pain management programs are considered gold standard in the treatment of chronic pain, however non-adherence and relapse rates remain high. The current study aimed to explore changes in treatment expectancy, as well as the influence of psychosocial factors on self-reported expectancy in patients referred to a pain management program. In an effort to gain further insight into how treatment expectancy may influence relapse. Seventy-one chronic pain patients completed self-report measures over four time points (pre-program; post-program; one-month; three-month follow-up). These measures assessed variables of depression, catastrophizing, fear of movement/(re)injury, self-efficacy, disability and pain intensity. Factor analysis, correlation, Linear Mixed Model and regression analysis were undertaken with results highlighting changes in treatment expectancy, influenced over time by poor coping and self-efficacy. These results lend support to the targeting of treatment expectancy by health care practitioners as a modifiable cognitive variable that should be considered when determining treatment, monitored throughout intervention and at follow-up. Addressing treatment expectancy throughout treatment may support efforts to reduce dropout rates and subsequent relapse within the chronic pain population. It is recommended that future research extend on these findings, further evaluating the influence and adaptability of treatment expectancy within a pain program.