

**Online Resource 4:** Frequency and severity of back pain, limitations of daily activities, days in bed due to back pain, and analgesic use in the last month

|   | <b>Baseline</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1454) | <b>3 months</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1259) | <b>6 months</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1289) | <b>12 months</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1242) | <b>18 months</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1004) | <b>24 months</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 321) |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Back pain experienced</b>                | ( <i>n</i> = 1444) <sup>a</sup>       | ( <i>n</i> = 1256)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1284)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1234)                     | ( <i>n</i> = 1000)                     | ( <i>n</i> = 312)                     |
| Yes, <i>n</i> (%)                           | 1311 (90.8)                           | 1095 (87.2)                           | 1075 (83.7)                           | 984 (79.7)                             | 740 (74.0)                             | 219 (70.2)                            |
| No, <i>n</i> (%)                            | 133 (9.2)                             | 161 (12.8)                            | 209 (16.3)                            | 250 (20.3)                             | 260 (26.0)                             | 93 (29.8)                             |
| <b>Frequency of back pain</b>               | ( <i>n</i> = 1311)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1095)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1075)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 984)                      | ( <i>n</i> = 740)                      | ( <i>n</i> = 219)                     |
| Once or twice, <i>n</i> (%)                 | 120 (9.2)                             | 214 (19.5)                            | 293 (27.3)                            | 302 (30.7)                             | 273 (36.9)                             | 81 (37.0)                             |
| A few times, <i>n</i> (%)                   | 180 (13.7)                            | 275 (25.1)                            | 258 (24.0)                            | 224 (22.8)                             | 151 (20.4)                             | 46 (21.0)                             |
| Fairly often, <i>n</i> (%)                  | 217 (16.6)                            | 208 (19.0)                            | 171 (15.9)                            | 167 (17.0)                             | 111 (15.0)                             | 29 (13.2)                             |
| Every/almost every day, <i>n</i> (%)        | 794 (60.0)                            | 398 (36.3)                            | 353 (32.8)                            | 291 (29.6)                             | 205 (27.7)                             | 63 (28.8)                             |
| <b>Severity of back pain</b>                | ( <i>n</i> = 1358)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1146)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1122)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1024)                     | ( <i>n</i> = 757)                      | ( <i>n</i> = 220)                     |
| Minor, <i>n</i> (%)                         | 257 (18.9)                            | 443 (38.7)                            | 525 (46.8)                            | 544 (53.1)                             | 414 (54.7)                             | 125 (56.8)                            |
| Moderate/severe, <i>n</i> (%)               | 1101 (81.1)                           | 703 (61.3)                            | 597 (53.2)                            | 480 (46.9)                             | 343 (45.3)                             | 95 (43.1)                             |
| <b>Limitation of activities<sup>b</sup></b> | ( <i>n</i> = 1375)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1166)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1158)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1060)                     | ( <i>n</i> = 809)                      | ( <i>n</i> = 238)                     |
| None, <i>n</i> (%)                          | 265 (19.3)                            | 394 (33.8)                            | 426 (36.8)                            | 429 (40.5)                             | 348 (43.0)                             | 93 (39.1)                             |
| Minor, <i>n</i> (%)                         | 278 (20.2)                            | 328 (28.1)                            | 351 (30.3)                            | 317 (29.9)                             | 246 (30.4)                             | 79 (33.2)                             |
| Moderate/severe, <i>n</i> (%)               | 832 (60.5)                            | 444 (38.1)                            | 381 (32.9)                            | 314 (29.6)                             | 215 (26.6)                             | 66 (27.7)                             |
| <b>Days in bed<sup>a</sup></b>              | ( <i>n</i> = 1387)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1183)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1178)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1101)                     | ( <i>n</i> = 845)                      | ( <i>n</i> = 254)                     |
| None, <i>n</i> (%)                          | 1140 (82.2)                           | 1069 (90.4)                           | 1106 (93.9)                           | 1036 (94.1)                            | 802 (94.9)                             | 240 (94.5)                            |
| At least one, <i>n</i> (%)                  | 247 (17.8)                            | 114 (9.6)                             | 72 (6.1)                              | 65 (5.9)                               | 43 (5.1)                               | 14 (5.5)                              |
| Median (Q1, Q3) <sup>c</sup>                | 8 (3, 15)                             | 5 (2, 14)                             | 5 (2, 6.5)                            | 3 (1, 5)                               | 2 (1, 5)                               | 3.5 (2, 5)                            |
| <b>Any analgesic use</b>                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1387)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1171)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1156)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1047)                     | ( <i>n</i> = 768)                      | ( <i>n</i> = 220)                     |
| Yes, <i>n</i> (%)                           | 1043 (75.2)                           | 764 (65.2)                            | 703 (60.8)                            | 647 (61.8)                             | 488 (63.5)                             | 129 (58.6)                            |
| No, <i>n</i> (%)                            | 344 (24.8)                            | 407 (34.8)                            | 453 (39.2)                            | 400 (38.2)                             | 280 (36.5)                             | 91 (41.4)                             |
| <b>Type of analgesic</b>                    | ( <i>n</i> = 1043)                    | ( <i>n</i> = 764)                     | ( <i>n</i> = 703)                     | ( <i>n</i> = 647)                      | ( <i>n</i> = 488)                      | ( <i>n</i> = 129)                     |
| Paracetamol, <i>n</i> (%)                   | 803 (77.0)                            | 572 (74.9)                            | 528 (75.1)                            | 494 (76.4)                             | 355 (72.7)                             | 92 (71.3)                             |
| ASA/NSAIDs, <i>n</i> (%)                    | 358 (34.3)                            | 204 (26.7)                            | 173 (24.6)                            | 158 (24.4)                             | 110 (22.5)                             | 32 (24.8)                             |
| Low-potency opiates, <i>n</i> (%)           | 254 (24.4)                            | 169 (22.1)                            | 153 (21.8)                            | 139 (21.5)                             | 96 (19.7)                              | 26 (20.2)                             |
| High-potency opiates, <i>n</i> (%)          | 118 (11.3)                            | 62 (8.1)                              | 68 (9.7)                              | 62 (9.6)                               | 42 (8.6)                               | 11 (8.5)                              |

<sup>a</sup>Number of patients with non-missing entries (denominator for percentages) for all back pain variables and analgesic use at all time points

<sup>b</sup>Due to back pain

<sup>c</sup>For those patients with at least one day in bed due to back pain

ASA, acetylsalicylic acid; NSAIDs, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs