# Chapter 52 Chronic Pain and Perceived Stress

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# Abstract

Pain is a complex, multidimensional experience that varies by individual and condition. Living with chronic pain is stressful and is associated with increased morbidity and mortality. Chronic pain is difficult to treat and has developed into a significant public health concern. Comprised of sensory and affective processes, the experience of pain is often perceived as a threat. Understanding the biological interface of chronic pain and associated psychosocial stressors will be important as we work to prevent, reduce, and eliminate the associated physiological toll and health-related consequences. Pain theories identify the importance of psychological and stress-related factors in the perception and persistence of pain. An array of neurobiological and biological evidence demonstrates altered and/or dysregulated functioning with chronic pain. Further investigations are needed to improve the characterization of chronic pain and perceived stress, to better understand the biological burden, and to identify targets for chronic pain prevention and treatment.