

Chronic pain may disrupt brain function

Chronic pain could disturb the balance of the brain and lead to other health problems, a new study says.

A chronic pain patient suffers from pain 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every minute of the life, the study said.

This could trigger other health problems like disturbed sleep, depression, anxiety and difficulty in making simple decisions.

That permanent perception of pain makes a particular area of the brain continuously active. This continuous dysfunction could hurt the brain, said the study that appeared in the Feb 6 issue of The Journal of Neuroscience.

Researchers led by Dante Chialvo used functional magnetic resonance imaging MRI to scan brain activity in people with chronic low back pain while they tracked a moving bar on a computer screen.

They did the same thing with a control group of people with no pain. In those with no pain, the brain regions displayed a state where one region was active, the other regions calmed down, reported health portal Health Day.

But in people with chronic pain, the front region of the brain associated with emotion 'never shuts up', Chialvo at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago said. This region remains highly active that could cause permanent damage.

Chialvo said the findings show that, along with finding new ways to treat pain, it's also important to develop methods to evaluate and prevent disruption of brain function caused by chronic pain.

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