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HOW COMMON IS LOW BACK PAIN IN SOCIETY?

Very common is the answer. It has been reported that over 80% of people in Australia will complain of low back pain in their lifetime. The following study done in 2004 showed that in the last six months a staggering **42%** of people had suffered low grade pain and disability, **11%** suffered high grade pain with low grade disability and **10.5% had suffered high grade pain and high grade disability.**

Low back pain in Australian adults: Prevalence and associated disability

Walker BF, Muller R, Grant WD.

OBJECTIVES: To determine the prevalence ranges of low back pain (LBP) together with any related disability in Australian adults.

DESIGN: A population-based survey.

METHODS: The survey was mailed in June 2001 to a stratified random sample of 3000 Australian adults selected from the Electoral Roll.

RESULTS: There was a 69% response rate. There was little variation between the sample and the Australian adult population. **In the previous 6-month period, 42.6% of the adult population had experienced low-intensity pain and low disability from it. Another 10.9% had experienced high intensity-pain but still low disability from this pain. However, 10.5% had experienced high-disability LBP.**

CONCLUSION: LBP is a common problem in the Australian adult population, yet most of this is low-intensity and low-disability pain. **Nevertheless, over 10% had been significantly disabled by LBP in the past 6 months.**

Source: Journal of Manipulative Physiological Therapeutics. 2004 May; 27(4): 238-44.