



Patient Experiences of a combined Exercise and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy group programme for chronic pain.

A qualitative study.

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Aim



- The aim of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of participants of a multidisciplinary intervention which combined ACT with exercise as a treatment for chronic pain.

Methodology

- Thirty-six participants completed an eight-week group based Pain Management Programme

ACT

**Supervised Exercise
(Gym and Pool)**

Education

- 22 participants attended one of four focus groups
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted by independent researcher
- Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim
- Transcripts were analysed using an interpretative phenomenological approach

Results



Theme 1. Group support and consequent validation of the pain experience

Theme 2. Frustration: lack of answers and understanding

Theme 3. Changed communication with other people

Theme 4. Practical strategies for managing pain including reduced fear of exercise and pacing

Theme 5. Values – family and self care

Theme 6. Acceptance

Theme 7. Mindfulness- Benefits and challenges

Conclusion



- Findings of this qualitative study demonstrate the acceptability of this type of intervention by individuals with chronic pain
- Participants reported gaining fundamental insights, which impacted on their overall ability to engage as more active participants in relation to enhanced interpersonal relationships, self care and general function.
- Further high quality trials are required to determine the effectiveness of these type of combined interventions and these trials should feature embedded qualitative studies to enhance our understanding of treatment effects.