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Body composition is associated with multisite lower body musculoskeletal pain in a community-based study

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Population-based studies suggest that pain in the lower body is common and that pain at multiple sites is more prevalent than single-site pain. Obesity is a risk factor for multisite musculoskeletal pain, but there are limited data on the role of body composition. Therefore, we sought to determine whether body composition is associated with multisite musculoskeletal pain involving the low back, knee, and foot. A total of 133 participants were recruited for a study examining the relationship between obesity and musculoskeletal disease. Participants completed validated questionnaires that examined levels of pain at the low back, knee, and foot. Body composition was assessed using dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry. Multisite pain was common, with 26.3% of participants reporting pain at 2 sites and 31.6% at 3 sites, and only 20% were pain free. The low back was the most common site of pain (63%). Greater fat mass and fat mass index, but not fat-free mass, were associated with pain at a greater number of sites, independent of age, gender, and fat-free mass ($P < 0.01$). Understanding the mechanism by which increased fat mass is associated with pain may provide important insights into therapeutic strategies for the prevention of pain.

Biography

Donna Urquhart is a National Health and Medical Research Fellow in the Monash University Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine and a physiotherapist with over 15 years of experience in the management of chronic pain. She has published more than 70 peer-review papers and has been awarded 5 prestigious national grants (2 as CIA). She has authored an invited book chapter in an international text and has been awarded an international investigator award for her novel work on body composition and pain. She is on the International Editorial Board for *Journal of Physiotherapy* and a reviewer for international/national treatment guidelines, grants and conferences.

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