Review Article

The COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences for chronic pain: a narrative review

H. Shanthanna, 1 A. M. Nelson, 2 N. Kissoon 3 and S. Narouze 4

1 Associate Professor, Department of Anesthesia, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada
2 Associate Professor, Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Care, University of California Irvine, Orange, CA, USA
3 Assistant Professor, Department of Neurology, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, USA
4 Chairman, Center for Pain Medicine, Western Reserve Hospital, Cuyahoga Falls, OH, USA

Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic transformed everyday life, but the implications were most impactful for vulnerable populations, including patients with chronic pain. Moreover, persistent pain is increasingly recognised as a key manifestation of long COVID. This narrative review explores the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for chronic pain. Publications were identified related to the COVID-19 pandemic influence on the burden of chronic pain, development of new-onset pain because of long COVID with proposed mechanisms and COVID-19 vaccines and pain interventions. Broadly, mechanisms underlying pain due to SARS-CoV-2 infection could be caused by `systemic inflammatory-immune mechanisms’, `direct neuropathic mechanisms’ or `secondary mechanisms due to the viral infection or treatment’. Existing chronic pain populations were variably impacted and social determinants of health appeared to influence the degree of effect. SARS-CoV-2 infection increased the absolute numbers of patients with pain and headache. In the acute phase, headache as a presenting symptom predicted a milder course. New-onset chronic pain was reportedly common and likely involves multiple mechanisms; however, its prevalence decreases over time and symptoms appear to fluctuate. Patients requiring intensive support were particularly susceptible to long COVID symptoms. Some evidence suggests steroid exposure (often used for pain interventions) may affect vaccine efficacy, but there is no evidence of clinical repercussions to date. Although existing chronic pain management could help with symptomatic relief, there is a need to advance research focusing on mechanism-based treatments within the domain of multidisciplinary care.

Introduction

The uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic led to abrupt interruption of treatment for patients suffering from chronic pain in March 2020. Total deaths in the subsequent two years of the pandemic now approach 6 million, despite the development of effective vaccines [1]. Delivery of medical care was transformed as healthcare systems were strained by acutely infected patients and supply chain disruption. This led to cancellation of procedures and other challenges for patients with chronic pain.

Much like the disease itself, the impact of COVID-19 on existing and newly developed pain is complex. COVID-19 and associated lockdowns have exhibited a variable effect on worldwide pain prevalence and morbidity. Globally,
there was an increase in search engine terms that included ‘pain’, suggesting increased public interest and concern on a global scale [2]. Across many countries, people were burdened by uncertainties regarding their job, physical distancing recommendations and social isolation, all of which could have influenced physiological pain and psychological distress [3, 4]. In North America, opioid-related deaths due to overdose increased during the pandemic, with all US states exhibiting an upward trend in mortality [5].

A preliminary literature search identified a need to report the consequences of the pandemic for chronic pain to help improve understanding and serve the needs of affected populations, both for clinical care and research endeavours. Published reviews or editorials have focused on a combination of post-COVID-19 symptoms [6]; considered only acute pain presentation from the infection [7, 8]; highlighted the potential for the increased rate and the need for rehabilitation [9, 10] or have become outdated [11]. Considering this gap, we set to review the published reports to evaluate the burden, type and progression of new-onset chronic pain after SARS-CoV-2 infection, as well as the influence of the pandemic on chronic pain patients. Additionally, we also reviewed the possible mechanisms underlying pain associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection and treatments being considered to address post-COVID-19 pain.

**Methods**

This narrative review was informed by a systematic search of the literature carried out in Medline, Embase and Cochrane databases that identified articles reporting on chronic pain or its treatment and COVID-19. The search terms for ‘pain’ or ‘chronic pain’ and combined with ‘COVID-19’ or terms to indicate post-COVID-19 sequelae (long COVID, post-acute COVID-19 syndrome, post-intensive care syndrome) using the OVID interface and the search strategy for Medline is shown in online Supporting Information (Appendix S1). The initial search was carried out on 7 February 2022 and repeated on 12 April 2022. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevant articles. The reference lists of all included citations were hand-searched to identify other additional studies. After removal of duplicates, we considered original English language articles of any study design to inform our results as relevant to our review objectives. Subsequently, selected articles were categorised into sections to summarise pertinent results in a narrative report.

**Results**

A total of 3859 titles and abstracts were considered. Since pain associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection was reported by a vast number of publications, we only considered articles where the study specifically assessed and reported pain symptoms. Key findings are summarised in Tables 1 and 2. Published literature related to pain after SARS-CoV-2 infection includes survivors with variable severity of illness and a heterogeneous spectrum of symptoms. Hence, pain consequences are described in different terms, such as post-acute coronavirus disease 2019/COVID-19 syndrome, COVID-19 long-haulers, post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection and long COVID [6, 12]. Some consider the constellation of symptoms similar to ‘post-intensive care syndrome’ [9, 13]. Although there is no established terminology or criteria for diagnosis of post-COVID-19 pain, most consider this to be the persistence of mental and physical health consequences after initial infection, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the criteria are met if symptoms persist for >4 weeks [14].

**Pain as a symptom of COVID-19**

Although we do not intend to detail the burden, features and treatment of acute COVID-19-related pain, it is relevant

---

**Table 1** Key findings on pain and headache associated with COVID-19.

| Acute SARS-CoV-2 infection can present with pain, commonly as myalgia, joint pains and headache [8] |
| New-onset chronic pain after SARS-CoV-2 infection is one of the five common features of long COVID. Its prevalence decreases over time and symptoms can fluctuate [25, 27] |
| Common pain conditions with long COVID include myalgia, fatigue, joint pains and post-intensive care syndrome-like syndrome [9, 12, 29] |
| Risk factors for developing chronic pain include the following: the need for intensive care, high BMI, female sex, myalgia at hospital admission, loneliness and a perception of increased isolation [12, 21, 28] |
| Possible mechanisms for pain include sympathetic overactivity, dysregulation of neural activity similar to chronic fatigue syndrome and inflammatory-immune mediators [37, 38, 42, 47] |
| Headache as a presenting symptom predicts a milder course, but delayed onset along with other neurological symptoms warrants evaluation for secondary causes [19] |
Shanthanna et al. | Consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for chronic pain Anaesthesia 2022, 77, 1039-1050

Table 2  Key findings regarding the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on chronic pain patients and the use of steroids for pain interventions.

| Across the world, the pandemic increased the physical and mental health burden in chronic pain patients, with some variations based on certain populations and subsets of patients [23, 58, 59] |
| Risk factors for increased pain included social isolation, lack of psychological support, female sex, lower level of education, reduced physical activity and disabled employment status [23, 77, 79] |
| Delivery of chronic pain care was affected, but telemedicine was well adapted in most developed countries for any non-interventional patient-provider interaction [120, 121] |
| Steroid exposure may reduce the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, but the existing data are unclear. It is best to consider avoiding steroid injections 2 weeks prior to the vaccine and at least 1 week following the vaccine [101, 122] |
| Steroid exposure does not seem to affect the SARS-CoV-2 infection rate. However, exposure to chronic opioids might be a risk factor for increased infection severity [29, 117] |

to recognise the association of acute pain and COVID-19. During acute infection, generalised myalgia and headache alongside upper respiratory symptoms were noted to be common symptoms. Based on studies published in the first 5 months of the pandemic (n = 12,046), the prevalence of arthralgia and/or myalgia was 15.5% [15]. Most studies originate from China, although studies from Europe reported a higher prevalence of both symptoms. It is not clear whether this difference was based on different strains of the virus or the different times of its effect from one to the other region. A systematic summary of 54 studies evaluating the incidence rate of symptoms noted the most common to be: headache (1.7–33.9%); sore throat (0.7–47.1%); myalgia/arthralgia (1.5–61.0%); chest pain (1.6–17.7%); and abdominal pain (1.9–14.5%) [8]. In a more recent telephone survey of 266 COVID-19 patients from Turkey, pain was reported by 72%, including myalgia (50%), headache (49%), pain with neuropathic symptoms (25%) and polyarthralgia (14%). Simple analgesics were used by 32% of patients and numbness was the most common neuropathic symptom, with a strong association between neuropathic symptoms and headache. Myalgia was significantly associated with female sex, fever, sore throat, headache and polyarthralgia [16]. Headache has been noted to be a common and important symptom during acute SARS-CoV-2 infection as well as post-COVID-19. It was noted to be one of the five most prevalent acute symptoms, with a specificity of 90%, along with the presence of fever, fatigue, myalgia and arthralgia in the early stages of the pandemic [17]. In a meta-analysis assessing the contribution of headache as an acute symptom, it was more prevalent in non-hospitalised (58%) than in hospitalised (31%) patients [18]. Patients presenting with headache typically had a shorter clinical course of SARS-CoV-2 infection with symptoms lasting 23 ± 11.6 days when compared with patients presenting without headache (31.2 ± 12.0 days) [19]. In a multicentre study of patients with severe COVID-19, the two most common pain symptoms were headache (30%) and chest pain (23%). Interestingly, the presence of headache was associated with lower likelihood of ICU admission, when age and sex were controlled, and absence of pain was associated with both ICU admission (OR 2.92) and death (OR 3.49) [20]. Most studies were retrospective reviews of hospital records or cross-sectional patient surveys and were susceptible to incomplete data or bias. However, some observations were consistent across studies, even those conducted in different countries. Importantly, the presence of headache in the acute phase seems to be associated with a relatively better outcome.

Burden of persisting pain in SARS-CoV-2 infection survivors

Studies reporting pain after SARS-CoV-2 infection are primarily surveys carried out at various intervals, either after diagnosis, admission or discharge from hospital [13], with few cohort [12] and case control studies [21]. It is difficult to know the specific number of studies capturing the post-COVID-19 pain burden and characteristics accurately since pain has been captured as one of the symptoms in many studies [22] and as the primary outcome in some [23, 24]. A review that considered studies reporting in German and English language early in the pandemic (up to 10/02/2020) noted a lack of clear data on long-lasting pain symptoms, although it highlighted the increased possibility [11]. The FAIR Health database of over 34 billion private healthcare claim records involving 1,959,982 COVID-19 patients, noted persistent pain in 5.1% of patients and was one of the five most common symptoms lasting 30 days or more after initial diagnosis [25]. Studies early in the pandemic identified an increase in joint pain or chest pain as predominant symptoms, when assessed 2–4 months after infection [22, 26]. In a relatively recent study, patients admitted to the hospital with COVID-19 symptoms had significantly higher prevalence of de-novo pain overall.
(65.2%), and de-novo headache (39.1%) compared with inpatient controls (11.0% and 2.7%, respectively, \( p = 0.001 \)). The prevalence of headache was observed to reduce over time, as indicated in a review and meta-analysis of 28,438 COVID-19 survivors. The overall prevalence of headache at varying periods was 47.1% (95%CI 35.8–58.6%) at onset or hospital admission; 10.2% (95%CI 5.4–18.5%) at 30 days; 16.5% (95%CI 5.6–39.7%) at 60 days; 10.6% (95%CI 4.7–22.3%) at 90 days; and 8.4% (95%CI 4.6–14.8%) at ≥180 days after onset/hospital discharge [18].

New-onset chronic pain (>3 months) had a prevalence of 19.6% in COVID-19 patients compared with 1.4% in controls (\( p = 0.002 \)), with these differences remaining significant even in patients with no previous pain [24]. In addition, COVID-19 patients who reported anosmia had a remarkably higher likelihood of new-onset pain (83.3%) compared with those with no changes in olfaction (48.0%, \( p = 0.024 \)). Considering that this is a relatively small cross-sectional study of 46 COVID-19 and 73 control patients and since no other study has observed this association of anosmia and pain, the certainty of evidence of this finding is low. A systematic review and meta-analysis assessed the time course and post-COVID-19 pain symptoms of musculoskeletal origin in 14,639 hospitalised and 11,070 non-hospitalised COVID-19 patients among studies up to May 2021. Approximately 10% reported suffering from musculoskeletal-related post-COVID-19 pain at some time during the first year, with myalgia (5.6%–18.2%), arthralgia (4.6%–12.1%) and chest pain (7.8%–23.6%) noted at different follow-up periods. Interestingly, they observed a decreased prevalence of post-COVID-19 pain from symptom onset to 30 days, an increase after 60 days, but a second decrease >180 days following infection [27]. This review included six preprints, alongside peer-reviewed studies, of which the majority (73%) were cross-sectional in design with only six being longitudinal cohort studies. Rheumatologic and musculoskeletal symptoms have been specifically assessed in a few subsequent studies. In 300 patients with COVID-19, 92.3%, 72.7% and 56.3% reported some musculoskeletal symptom at hospitalisation, 2 weeks and 1 month, respectively. These symptoms predominantly included fatigue (44.3%); back pain (22.7%); arthralgia (22.0%); myalgia (21.0%); low back pain (16.3%); and neck pain (10.3%) at 1 month. Higher BMI was associated with increased odds of persistence of fatigue (OR 1.08, 95%CI 1.03–1.13), myalgia (OR 1.08, 95%CI 1.01–1.14) and arthralgia (OR 1.07, 95%CI 1.02–1.14, \( p = 0.012 \)) at 1 month [12]. When they followed the same cohort of patients at 3 and 6 months, 74.6% and 43.2% had at least one rheumatic and musculoskeletal symptoms, respectively [28].

At 6 months, common symptoms included fatigue (31.6%), joint pain (18.6%) and myalgia (15.1%). In an adjusted model, female patients were more likely to have fatigue (OR 1.99, 95%CI 1.18–3.34), myalgia (OR 3.00, 95%CI 1.51–5.98) and joint pain (OR 3.39, 95%CI 1.78–6.50) at 6 months. In a study of 738 patients hospitalised for COVID-19, patients with myalgia at admission (n = 369) were more likely to experience persistent musculoskeletal pain (42.5%) compared with patients without myalgia (34.5%) at 7 months post-infection [21]. Patients with myalgia were also more likely to have >3 long-term post-COVID-19 symptoms, the most prevalent of which were fatigue, dyspnoea on exertion, musculoskeletal pain, dyspnoea at rest, hair loss and memory loss. If one considers ‘worsening of pre-existing musculoskeletal pain’ or ‘new-onset musculoskeletal pain’, the prevalence of new-onset post-COVID-19 musculoskeletal pain was 73.2% [21]. There is a paucity of evidence regarding long-term opioid therapy and the COVID-19 pandemic. A large retrospective database study indicated worse outcomes in patients on long-term opioid therapy, including increased likelihood of Emergency Department visits, hospitalisations, mechanical ventilation, vasopressor support and mortality; however, investigators were unable to assess effects based on opioid dosing [29]. A more recent review and meta-analysis included five good quality observational studies and reported COVID-19 patients with concomitant opioid use had an increase in mortality (OR 1.72, 95%CI 1.09–2.72, \( p = 0.02 \)) and ICU admission in adjusted analysis [30]. Although these studies do not differentiate between prescription and other opioid use, the conclusions suggest opioids influence disease severity by multiple mechanisms including immune modulation and respiratory depression.

Patients with critical COVID-19 are predisposed to a range of pain symptoms, similar to those observed in post-intensive care syndrome. Exposure to mechanical ventilation, neuromuscular blockers and steroids leads to increased risk of developing acute respiratory distress syndrome, myopathy and post-traumatic stress disorder [9]. Prone positioning as a ventilation strategy has been reported to add additional risk of peripheral nerve injury with possible weakness and subsequent pain [31, 32]. Early in the pandemic, among 100 patients treated in the ICU, pain was the sixth most common symptom at 48 days after discharge [33]. To address the needs of post-intensive care syndrome, including chronic pain, in COVID-19 ICU patients, Ojeda et al. reported their randomised controlled trial protocol involving early care, therapeutic education and psychological intervention [34] and separately published findings in patients screened for their
randomised controlled trial and surveyed 1 month after discharge. Among 65 patients, 51% had new-onset pain with 44% having pain in >2 body sites and 39% having clinically significant pain (≥3 NRS) [13]. Many of them presented with a diffuse pain syndrome associated with fatigue, myalgia and associated post-traumatic stress disorder and depression [10, 35]. Reports after the SARS epidemic in 2010 describe similar symptoms that mirror fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome [36]. By 6 months following discharge, the majority of COVID-19 ICU admissions were noted to have similar pain rates to the general population, but those with lasting symptoms are often tremendously functionally debilitated [36].

Mechanisms and treatment considerations of COVID-related pain

It is likely that pain associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection has multiple causes [7, 37]. Three main broad categories arise from published literature: systemic inflammatory immune mechanisms; direct neuropathic mechanisms as primary cases; and secondary mechanisms due to COVID-19 pathology or treatment (Fig. 1). The viral infection involves significant inflammatory and immune changes along with the involvement of the nervous system through various routes [38]. The proposed mechanisms could involve neuro-inflammation through direct entry to central nervous system by binding to the neuropilin-1 (NRP-1) receptor at the olfactory cavity or by disruption of the blood-brain barrier (neurotropism) [39], along with systemic infection via angiotensin-2 receptors [40]. Interestingly in a rat model, binding of NRP-1 with the viral spike protein seemed to not only block vascular endothelial growth factor-A and NRP binding, but also demonstrate anti-allodynic properties, suggesting decreased pain symptoms could play a role in increased disease transmission [41]. Nervous system involvement can disrupt homeostatic mechanisms targeting a stress integrator at the hypothalamus, thereby leading to fatigue symptoms similar to myalgic encephalitis or chronic fatigue syndrome [42, 43]. In support of this, ongoing investigations have considered the use of low-dose naltrexone [44, 45] that could also influence the release of pro-inflammatory cytokines [46]. Several reports indicate the involvement of the autonomic nervous system, specifically the sympathetic nervous system [47]. It is not clear if in a subset of patients the sympathetic nervous system is more involved; however, a higher risk of unfavourable outcomes occurs in patients with comorbidities [48]. This could lead to a state of dysautonomia or hyperinflammation [49, 50]. To regulate sympathetic overactivity, stellate ganglion blocks have been considered [48, 50]. However, the rationale for blocking the sphenopalatine ganglion for non-specific headache is not clear [51, 52]. Myalgia is common in other viral disease, mediated by interleukin-6 (IL-6), upregulated in muscle and joint tissues [7]. It is unclear if the accumulation of angiotensin-2 could lead to the possibility of central pain [37]. Admission to ICU can be associated with secondary causes of pain and post-intensive care-like syndrome [9]. Myopathy can be induced by medications and immobility. Positioning for prone ventilation can lead to peripheral nerve and other injuries [31, 32]. Similarly, the known increased incidence of stroke in COVID-19 patients could contribute to higher burden of post-stroke pain in survivors [53]. Considering the diverse physiological and psychological impairments found in COVID-19 patients, treatment focus has been on multidisciplinary interventions to promote physical and psychological rehabilitation [9, 54].

Pandemic influence on patients with pre-existing chronic pain

The pandemic impacted chronic pain patients due to increases in social isolation, anxiety and depression, in addition to disruption of healthcare delivery (Fig. 2). Reports of the impact on pain burden differed internationally. The COVID-19-related lockdowns increased the burden of pain in chronic pain patients in Spain [55–57], the United Kingdom [58], the United States [59], Canada [60], Japan [23, 61], Austria, Germany and Switzerland [62]. One of the largest surveys, of 25,482 Japanese participants conducted in August 2020, observed that 10.4% of patients reported persistent pain during the pandemic, while only 6.3% of participants had pre-existing chronic pain. Loneliness and a perception of increased social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic were associated with increased prevalence and incidence of all types of pain and pain intensity [23]. In an early European survey involving 719 patients from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, chronic pain worsened in 53% of patients in whom both biological and psychosocial factors were noted to be associated [62]. Similarly, a patient survey across 14 countries (n = 14,975) showed increases in pain symptoms during the pandemic [63], which were more dramatic in certain diseases states, such as systemic lupus erythematosus [64] and fibromyalgia [65, 66]. In contrast, some studies showed improvement in existing pain during the pandemic in pain patient populations [67] or in specific patient groups such as the endometriosis population (n = 285) [68]. Many other reports showed the pain burden did not differ markedly before and after the pandemic [69–72]. A large international study showed no change in pain in five European countries.
during the pandemic but did show increased pain in the Brazilian cohort [73]. Additionally, other studies showed mixed results, with patients reporting increases or decreases in functionality within the same conducted study depending on the survey tool used [74]. Although similar pain scores have been reported in patients pre- and post-pandemic [69, 70], vulnerable populations were more likely to experience increased pain burden due to patient factors influenced by pandemic settings. For example, a study in Texas showed that Caucasian patients reported an improvement in back pain during the pandemic, while Black/African-American patients did not [75, 76]. Risk factors for increased pain burden during the pandemic include the following: female sex; non-white race; lower level of education; and disabled employment status [77–79]. In young people with chronic pain, direct exposure to SARS-CoV-2 infection did not impact pain but economic stress did worsen pain symptoms [80]. In many cases, pain catastrophising or anxiety was linked to greater perceived severity of pain during the pandemic [78, 81]. Although widespread adoption of telemedicine facilitated healthcare access, patients with higher pain burden or level of anxiety were found to be less accepting of telemedicine [82] and patients who also had delays or cancellations of interventions were more likely to report increased pain [83, 84]. There was a substantial increase in opioid overdose deaths in the United States and Canada during the pandemic [5, 85], but it is not clear if opioid prescriptions to pain patients was contributory. Given decreased access of patients to surgical and medical procedures, it is likely that this increase in overdoses or deaths was driven by increased use of illicit fentanyl, fentanyl analogues, methamphetamine and cocaine.
often in combination or adulterated formulations [86]. Data from Europe indicate that there has always (before and during the pandemic) been a wide variability in access to prescription opioids [87]. Although most recent data are not available, a June 2020 report from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, as well as an independent report from Harm Reduction International, indicates there has been overall decrease in the availability of illegal drugs largely as a result of pandemic-related confinement measures in both Europe and Asia [88, 89]. The pandemic decreased psychological support and reduced ability of chronic pain patients to employ coping strategies for pain [90–92]. Even in studies that showed no increase in pain, other measures of quality of life such as coping, mood and social support worsened during the lockdown [93–95]. Scores of physical and mental well-being seemed to universally decrease in all countries due to the pandemic [63], and introverted patients [96] or those with increased social isolation or loneliness [23] were more likely to experience increased pain. Although the quality of evidence is low, many studies demonstrate a reduction in pain and an improvement in physical function with regular activity or exercise [97]. During the period of lockdown, increased pain intensity was associated with reduced physical activity [98, 99]. Such reduction in physical activity was observed to be mediated by fear avoidance and catastrophising [58].

Intensity of fear regarding contracting COVID-19 was also linked to higher pain intensity and decreased level of function in patients with existing chronic pain [100].

**COVID-19 vaccines and chronic pain interventions**

Vaccines in circulation for SARS-CoV-2 infection as of March 2022 offer protection via the humoral and cellular immune response pathways, conferred after 14 days following the viral vector AstraZeneca and Johnson and Johnson vaccine and 7 days after the second dose of the mRNA-based vaccines BNT162b2 (Pfizer) and mRNA-1273 (Moderna) [101]. There have been concerns that their efficacy is decreased in patients exposed to steroids [102, 103]. Although the CDC has not made recommendations regarding steroid injection for pain management or the timing of the COVID-19 vaccination, some data exist to drive recommendations. Studies have shown that patients taking corticosteroids have a decreased immune response to hepatitis B [104], influenza [105], pneumococcal [106] and Pfizer and Moderna mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccines [102]. Other studies have shown no reduction in immune response to tetanus toxoid [107] or influenza vaccine [108, 109] after a short course of steroids. Unfortunately, the Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines were all developed in trials that excluded patients that were taking ≥20 mg.day\(^{-1}\) of prednisone steroid equivalent for >14 days in the 6 months prior to enrolment. The Johnson and Johnson vaccine trial (Janssen phase III ENSEMBLE) excluded patients exposed to >2 weeks of daily prednisone in the 6 months prior to the trial [110]. Despite these early restrictions hindering understanding of the effect of steroids on vaccine response, some emerging studies suggest that vaccine effectiveness is reduced in the setting of steroid exposure. The Advisory Committee on Immunisation Practices of the CDC reported that patients on high-dose corticosteroids may have reduced response to the second dose of the mRNA vaccine and therefore require a third dose >28 days after the second [111]. This is supported by the study by Naranbhai et al., which demonstrated lower antibody levels after vaccine in cancer patients using steroids [112]. Similar findings were observed in patients with chronic inflammatory disease taking prednisone. A small study (n = 133) demonstrated a 10-fold reduction in antibody titres and reduced ability to neutralise virus in patients with a mean daily dose of 6.5 mg prednisone [102]. This appeared to be dose independent, as the effect persisted even in patients taking < 5 mg.day\(^{-1}\). These findings should therefore be considered in patients presenting for steroid-based pain procedures. Findings were similar in a study of

**Figure 2** Factors influencing symptoms burden during the COVID-19 pandemic on existing chronic pain patients.

© 2022 Association of Anaesthetists.
patients with rheumatic disease, where patients taking glucocorticoids (n = 130), at a mean prednisone dose of 6.7 ± 6.25 mg.day⁻¹, had reduced immunogenic response to the Pfizer mRNA vaccine [103]. However, a Veterans Affairs cohort with inflammatory bowel disease showed no difference in vaccine effectiveness in the steroid exposed or unexposed [113], suggesting that the reduced quantitative titres may not have clinical impact. Increased risk of infection is a well-established side effect of chronic steroid use [114] and known risk factors for breakthrough SARS-CoV-2 infection despite vaccinated status include age >50 y and immunosuppression [Tenforde et al., preprint, https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.07.08.21259776]. Steroids act as immunosuppressives drugs via disruption of inflammatory cytokine pathways and myriad other mechanisms that continue to be a topic of scientific inquiry [115]. However, a retrospective study evaluating IgG antibodies in 443 patients who had received a cumulative total of 504 steroid injections during the pandemic noted no difference in SARS-CoV-2 infection rates [116]. The Advisory Committee on Immunisation Practices reported that live virus vaccines (currently under development for COVID-19) are not contraindicated due to steroid use, provided the therapy is < 2 weeks in duration and low to moderate doses. If these criteria are not met, live virus vaccine administration should be delayed 3 months after cessation of high-dose or longer than 2 weeks of daily steroid therapy [117]. Many studies have noted that in the setting of a live vaccine, if doses of prednisone over 2 mg.kg⁻¹ or 20 mg.day⁻¹ are delivered for more than 2 weeks, there is a concern for development of infection [118]. This group also stated that the administration of steroid by injection to joint, bursa or tendon would not contraindicate use of live vaccine [119], although they did not make recommendations about the live virus COVID-19 vaccines that are currently under development.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to increase the burden of pain in most parts of the world, not exclusively in patients with pre-existing chronic pain but also in anyone infected with SARS-CoV-2 and developed enduring pain symptoms. Our review indicates a need for attention to the consequences of persistent pain in patients after any severity of COVID-19, with increased risk of post-intensive care syndrome in patients requiring ICU care. Patients with certain characteristics are more susceptible to pandemic effects, which contribute to increased pain burden in pre-existing chronic pain patients. Treatment for most patients will need multidisciplinary care, and there is a need to advance research focusing on mechanism-based treatments.

Acknowledgements
No competing interests declared.

References
1. World Health Organization. WHO coronavirus (COVID-19) dashboard. https://covid19.who.int (accessed 14/02/2022).
2. Szilagyi IS, Ullrich T, Lang-Ilievich K, et al. Google trends for pain search terms in the world’s most populated regions before and after the first recorded COVID-19 case: Infodemiological study. Journal of Medical Internet Research 2021; 23:e27214.
3. COVID-19 Mental Disorders Collaborators. Global prevalence and burden of depressive and anxiety disorders in 204 countries and territories in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lancet 2021; 398: 1700–12.
4. Saladino V, Algeri D, Auriemma V. The psychological and social impact of Covid-19: new perspectives of well-being. Frontiers in Psychology 2020; 11: 577684.
5. Imtiaz S, Nafeh F, Russell C, Ali F, Elton-Marshall T, Rehm J. The impact of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on drug overdose-related deaths in the United States and Canada: a systematic review of observational studies and analysis of public health surveillance data. Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy 2021; 16: 87.
6. Kopanczyk R, Kumar N, Papadimos T. Post-acute COVID-19 syndrome for anesthesiologists: a narrative review and a pragmatic approach to clinical care. Journal of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesia 2021; 36: 2727–37.
7. Drozdżal S, Rosik J, Lechowicz K, et al. COVID-19: pain management in patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection-molecular mechanisms, challenges, and perspectives. Brain Sciences 2020; 10: 465.
8. Weng LM, Su X, Wang XQ. Pain symptoms in patients with coronavirus disease (COVID-19): a literature review. Journal of Pain Research 2021; 14: 147–59.
9. Kemp HI, Corner E, Colvin LA. Chronic pain after COVID-19: implications for rehabilitation. British Journal of Anaesthesia 2020; 125: 436–40.
10. Rubin R. As their numbers grow, COVID-19 “long haulers” stump experts. Journal of the American Medical Association 2020; 324: 1381–3.
11. Meyer-Friesehem CH, Giethmühlen J, Baron R, Sommer C, Üçeyler N, Enax-Krumova EK. Pain during and after COVID-19 in Germany and worldwide: a narrative review of current knowledge. Pain Reports 2021; 6: e693.
12. Karaarslan F, Demircioğlu Güneri F, Kardes S. Postdischarge rheumatic and musculoskeletal symptoms following hospitalization for COVID-19: prospective follow-up by phone interviews. Rheumatology International 2021; 41: 1263–71.
13. Ojeda A, Calvo A, Cuhalt T, et al. Characteristics and influence on quality of life of new-onset pain in critical COVID-19 survivors. European Journal of Pain 2022; 26: 680–94.
14. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Post-COVID conditions: information for healthcare providers. 2022. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/care/living-post-covid-conditions.html (accessed 14/02/2022).
15. Cipollaro L, Giordano L, Padulo J, Oliva F, Maffulli N. Musculoskeletal symptoms in SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) patients. Journal of Orthopaedic Surgery and Research 2020; 15: 178.
16. Oguz-Akarsu E, Gullu G, Kiliç E, et al. Insight into pain syndromes in acute phase of mild-to-moderate COVID-19: frequency, clinical characteristics, and associated factors. European Journal of Pain 2022; 26: 492–504.
17. Struyf T, Deeks JJ, Dinnes J, et al. Signs and symptoms to determine if a patient presenting in primary care or hospital
outpatient settings has COVID-19 disease. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2020; 7: CD013665.

18. Fernández-de-Las-Peñas C, Navarro-Santana M, Gómez-Mayordomo V, et al. Headache as an acute and post-COVID-19 symptom in COVID-19 survivors: a meta-analysis of the current literature. European Journal of Neurology 2021; 28: 3820–5.

19. Caronna E, Ballvé A, Llauradó A, et al. Headache: a striking prodromal and persistent symptom, predictive of COVID-19 clinical evolution. Cephalalgia 2020; 40: 1410–21.

20. Knox N, Lee CS, Moon JY, Cohen SP. Pain manifestations of COVID-19 and their association with mortality: a multicenter prospective observational study. Mayo Clinic Proceedings 2021; 96: 943–51.

21. Fernández-de-Las-Peñas C, Rodríguez-Jiménez J, Fuensalida-Novos S, et al. Myalgia as a symptom at hospital admission by severe acute respiratory symptom coronavirus 2 infection is associated with persistent musculoskeletal pain as long-term post-COVID sequelae: a case-control study. Pain 2021; 162: 2832–40.

22. Carli A, Bernabei R, Landi F. Persistent symptoms in patients after acute COVID-19. Journal of the American Medical Association 2020; 324: 603–5.

23. Yamada K, Wakaizumi K, Kubota Y, Murayama H, Tabuchi T. Loneliness, social isolation, and pain following the COVID-19 outbreak: data from a nationwide internet survey in Japan. Scientific Reports 2021; 11: 18643.

24. Soares FHC, Kubota GT, Fernandes AM, et al. Prevalence and characteristics of new-onset pain in COVID-19 survivors, a controlled study. European Journal of Pain 2021; 25: 1342–54.

25. FAIR Health. A detailed study of patients with long-haul COVID-19. Global Health 2021; 54: e1009153.

26. Garrigues E, Janvier P, Kherabi Y, et al. Post-discharge persistent symptoms and health-related quality of life after hospitalization for COVID-19. Journal of Infection 2020; 81: e4–6.

27. Fernández-de-Las-Peñas C, Navarro-Santana M, Plaza-Manzano G, Palacios-Ceña D, Arendt-Nielsen L. Time course prevalence of post-COVID pain symptoms of musculoskeletal origin in patients who had survived to severe acute respiratory symptom coronavirus 2 infection: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Pain 2022; 163: 1220–31.

28. Karaarslan F, Gurer FD, Kardes S. Long COVID: rheumatologic/musculoskeletal symptoms in hospitalized COVID-19 survivors at 3 and 6 months. Clinical Rheumatology 2022; 41: 289–96.

29. Tuan WJ, Spotts H, Zgieska AE, Lennon RP. COVID-19 outcomes among adult patients treated with long-term opioid therapy for chronic non-cancer pain in the USA: a retrospective cohort study. British Medical Journal Open 2021; 11: e056436.

30. Ao G, Li A, Wang Y, et al. Opioid usage and COVID-19 prognosis: a systematic review and meta-analysis. American Journal of Emergency Medicine 2022; 56: 51–6.

31. Liu EA, Salazar T, Chiu E, et al. Focal peripheral neuropathies observed in patients diagnosed with COVID-19: a case series. American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation 2022; 101: 164–9.

32. Malik GR, Wolfe AR, Soriano R, et al. Injury-prone: peripheral nerve injuries associated with prone positioning for COVID-19-related acute respiratory distress syndrome. British Journal of Anaesthesia 2020; 125: e478–e480.

33. Halpin SJ, McVor C, Whyatt G, et al. Postdischarge symptoms and rehabilitation needs in survivors of COVID-19 infection: a cross-sectional evaluation. Journal of Medical Virology 2021; 93: 1013–22.

34. Ojeda A, Calvo A, Cuñat T, et al. Rationale and study design of an early care, therapeutic education, and psychological intervention program for the management of post-intensive care syndrome and chronic pain after COVID-19 infection (PAIN-COVID): study protocol for a randomized controlled trial. Trials 2021; 22: 486.

35. Scordo KA, Richardson MM, Munro N. Post-COVID-19 syndrome: theoretical basis, identification, and management. American Association of Critical-Care Nurses Advanced Critical Care 2021; 32: 984–99.

36. Moldofsky H, Patcai J. Chronic widespread musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, depression and disordered sleep in chronic post-SARS syndrome; a case-controlled study. BMC Neurology 2011; 11: 37.

37. Su S, Cui H, Wang T, Shen X, Ma C. Pain: a potential new label of COVID-19. Brain, Behavior, and Immunity 2020; 87: 159–60.

38. Sheraton M, Deo N, Kashyap R, Surani S. A review of neurological complications of COVID-19. Cureus 2020; 12: e8192.

39. Baig AM, Khaleeq A, Ali U, Syeda H. Evidence of the COVID-19 virus targeting the CNS: tissue distribution, host-virus interaction, and proposed neurotropic mechanisms. American Chemical Society Chemical Neuroscience 2020; 11: 995–8.

40. Moutal A, Martin LF, Boinon L, et al. SARS-CoV-2 spike protein co-opts VEGF-A/neuropilin-1 receptor signaling to induce analgesia. Pain 2021; 162: 243–52.

41. Anand H, Ende V, Singh G, Qureshi I, Duong TQ, Meher MF. Nervous system-systemic crosstalk in SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19: a unique dyshomeostasis syndrome. Frontiers in Neuroscience 2021; 15: 727060.

42. Mackay A. A paradigm for post-Covid-19 fatigue syndrome analogous to ME/CFS. Frontiers in Neurology 2021; 12: 701419.

43. Clinicaltrials.gov. Impact of colchicine and low-dose naltrexone on COVID-19 (COLTREXONE). https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04756128 (accessed 14/02/2022).

44. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. A double blind randomized trial of low-dose naltrexone for post-covid fatigue syndrome. https://webapps.chnr-irsc.gc.ca/decisions/p/project_details.html?applId=4480926&lang=en (accessed 14/02/2022).

45. Choubey A, Dehury B, Kumar S, Medhi B, Mondal P. Naltrexone a potential therapeutic candidate for COVID-19. Journal of Biomolecular Structure and Dynamics 2022; 40: 963–70.

46. Dani M, Dirksen A, Taraborrelli P, et al. Autonomic dysfunction in ‘long COVID’: rationale, physiology and management strategies. Clinical Medicine 2021; 21: e63–e67.

47. Porzionato A, Enmi A, Barbon S, et al. Sympathetic activation: a potential link between comorbidities and COVID-19. Federation of European Biochemical Societies Journal 2020; 287: 3681–8.

48. Al-Kuraisy HM, Al-Gareeb AI, Quisti S, Alshammari EM, Gyebi GA, Batish GE. Covid-19-induced dysautonomia: a menace of sympathetic storm. American Society for Neurochemistry Neurology 2021; 13: 17590914211057635.

49. Fischer L, Barop H, Ludin SM, Schaible HG. Regulation of acute inflammation in viral and other diseases by means of sterile ganglion block. A conceptual view with a focus on Covid-19. Autonomic Neuroscience: Basic and Clinical 2022; 237: 102903.

50. Machado FC, Carone Neto G, Carone RSD. Sphenopalatine ganglion block for refractory COVID-19 headache: a descriptive case series. Brazilian Journal of Anesthesiology 2021; 71: 667–9.

51. Mojica J, Mo B, Ng A. Sphenopalatine ganglion block in the management of chronic headaches. Current Pain and Headache Reports 2017; 21: 27.
53. Siepmann T, Sedghi A, Simon E, et al. Increased risk of acute stroke among patients with severe COVID-19: a multicenter study and meta-analysis. European Journal of Neurology 2021; 28: 238–47.

54. Carda S, Invernizzi M, Bavikatte G, et al. COVID-19 pandemic. What should physical and rehabilitation medicine specialists do? A clinician’s perspective. European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine 2020; 56: 515–24.

55. Garcia-Esquinas E, Ortola R, Gine-Vazquez I, et al. Changes in health behaviors, mental and physical health among older adults under severe lockdown restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 2021; 18: 7067.

56. Miro J, Sanchez-Rodriguez E, Ferreira-Valente A, Pais-Ribeiro J, Ciaramella A. Effects of COVID-19 social distancing measures in individuals with chronic pain living in Spain in the late stages of the lockdown. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 2021; 18: 11732.

57. Nieto R, Pardo R, Sora B, Felu-Soler A, Luciano JV. Impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures on Spanish people with chronic pain: an online study survey. Journal of Clinical Medicine 2020; 9: 3538.

58. Fallon N, Brown C, Twiddy H, et al. Adverse effects of COVID-19-related lockdown on pain, physical activity and psychological well-being in people with chronic pain. British Journal of Pain 2021; 15: 357–68.

59. Mun CJ, Campbell CM, McGill LS, Aaron RV. The early impact of the COVID-19 lockdown and the behavior change on physical exercise, psychological well-being, and pain-related variables among patients with chronic pain. Journal of Anesthesia 2021; 2557–8.

60. Page MG, Lacasse A, Dassieu L, et al. A cross-sectional study of psychosocial and pain-related variables among patients with chronic pain & COVID-19 pan-Canadian study. Health Promoton and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada 2021; 41: 141–52.

61. Yoshimoto T, Fuji T, Oka H, Kasahara S, Kawamura K, Matsuura K. Pain status and its association with physical activity, psychological stress, and telework among Japanese workers with pain during the COVID-19 pandemic. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 2021; 18: 5595.

62. Lang-Illiech K, Rumpold-Settlinger G, Szlagay I5, et al. Biological, psychological, and social factors associated with worsening of chronic pain during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional survey. British Journal of Anaesthesia 2021; 127: e37–e39.

63. Wilke J, Hollander K, Mohr L, et al. Drastic reductions in mental well-being observed globally during the COVID-19 pandemic: results from the ASAP survey. Frontiers in Medicine 2021; 8: S78959.

64. Kastun S, Price LL, Paishkin V, Salmon JE, McAlindon TE, Mandl LA. Impact of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic on systemic lupus erythematosus patients: results from a multicenter prospective cohort. Lupus 2021; 30: 1747–55.

65. Macfarlane GJ, Hollick RJ, Morton L, et al. The effect of COVID-19 public health restrictions on the health of people with musculoskeletal conditions and symptoms: the CONTAIN study. Rheumatology 2021; 60: SI15–SI24.

66. Sadun R, Rogers J, Sun K, et al. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the fibromyalgia symptoms of SLE patients. Arthritis and Rheumatology 2020; 72: 2557–9.

67. Zambelli Z, Fidalgo AR, Halstead EJ, Dimitriou D. Acute impact of a national lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic on wellbeing outcomes among individuals with chronic pain. Journal of Health Psychology 2021; 27: 1359105321995962.

68. Schwab R, Anic K, Stewart K, et al. Pain experience and social support of endometriosis patients during the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany - results of a web-based cross-sectional survey. PLoS One 2021; 16: e0256433.

69. Fujiwara A, Watanabe K, Ida M, et al. The short-term effect of COVID-19 pandemic on disability, pain intensity, psychological status, and exercise habits in patients with chronic pain. Journal of Anesthesia 2021; 35: 862–9.

70. Hasseri R, Muller-Ladner U, Schmeiser T, et al. Disease activity and pain levels are not influenced by the current COVID19 pandemic in patients with rheumatic diseases in Germany: data from the German COVID-19 patient survey. Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases 2021; 80: 915.

71. Kersebaum D, Fabig SC, Sendel M, et al. The early influence of COVID-19 pandemic-associated restrictions on pain, mood, and everyday life of patients with painful polyneuropathy. Pain Reports 2020; 5: e858.

72. Lassen CL, Siam L, Degenhart A, et al. Liftings of COVID-19 pandemic on disability, pain intensity and psychological status, and exercise habits in patients with chronic pain. Journal of Anesthesia 2021; 35: 862–9.

73. Sonza A, da Cunha de Sá-Caputo D, Sartorio A, et al. COVID-19 lockdown and the behavior change on physical exercise, pain and psychological well-being: an international multicentric study. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 2021; 18: 3810.

74. Kieser DC, Bourghil A, Larrieu D, et al. Impact of COVID-19 on the pain and disability of patients with adult spinal deformity. Spine Deformity 2021; 9: 1073–6.

75. Licciodarone JC. Impact of COVID-19 on utilization of nonpharmacological and pharmacological treatments for chronic low back pain and clinical outcomes. Journal of Osteopathic Medicine 2021; 121: 625–33.

76. Licciardone JC. Demographic characteristics associated with utilization of noninvasive treatments for chronic low back pain and related clinical outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine 2021; 34: S77–S84.

77. Dassieu L, Page MG, Lacasse A, et al. Chronic pain experience and health inequities during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada: qualitative findings from the chronic pain & COVID-19 pan-Canadian study. Journal of Pain Practice 2021; 27: e3810.

78. Koppert TY, Jacobs JWG, Lumley MA, Geenens R. The impact of COVID-19 stress on pain and fatigue in people with and without a central sensitivity syndrome. Journal of Psychosomatic Research 2021; 151: 110655.

79. Law EF, Zhou C, Seung F, Perry F, Palermo TM. Longitudinal study of early adaptation to the coronavirus disease pandemic among youth with chronic pain and their parents: effects of direct exposures and economic stress. Pain 2021; 162: 2132–44.

80. Li W, Zhao N, Yan X, et al. The prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms and their associations with quality of life among clinically stable older patients with psychiatric disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Translational Psychiatry 2021; 11: 75.

81. Harnik MA, Blattler L, Limacher A, et al. Telemedicine for chronic pain treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic: do pain intensity and anxiousness correlate with patient acceptance? Pain Practice 2021; 21: 934–42.

82. Kleinmann B, Abberger B, Kieselbach W, Wolter T. Patients with chronic pain prefer maintenance of pain treatment despite COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Pain Physician 2021; 24: 165–73.
84. Teuschl Y, Bancher C, Brainin M, Dachenhausen A, Matz K, Pinter MM. COVID-19-related delays of botulinum toxin injections have a negative impact on the quality of life of patients with dystonia and spasticity: a single-center ambulatory care study. Journal of Neural Transmission 2022; 129: 49–53.

85. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Provisional drug overdose death counts. 2022. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvsrss/vsrtdrug-overdose-data.htm (accessed 21/02/2022).

86. American Medical Association. Nation’s drug-related overdose and death epidemic continues to worsen. 2021.

87. Pierce M, van Amsterdam J, Kalkman GA, Schellekens A, van den Brink W. Is Europe facing an opioid crisis like the United States? An analysis of opioid use and related adverse effects in 19 European countries between 2010 and 2018. European Psychiatry 2021; 64: e47.

88. European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. The impact of COVID-19 on harm reduction in seven Asian countries. 2020. https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/ad-hoc-EMCDDA-Trendspotter-brief/effect-of-covid-19-impact-asia-countries.

89. Choudhury L. The impact of COVID-19 on harm reduction in 19 European countries between 2010 and 2018. European Psychiatry 2021; 64: e47.

90. Martin L, Dowling A, Mishra S. The detrimental impact of COVID-19 on chronic pain patients. Anaesthesia 2021; 76: 61.

91. Neville A, Lund T, Soltani S, et al. Pediatric chronic pain in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic: lived experiences of youth and parents. Journal of Pain 2021; 13: 13.

92. Serrano-Ibanez ER, Esteve R, Ramirez-Maestre C, Ruiz-Parraga GT, Lopez-Martinez AE. Chronic pain in the time of COVID-19: stress aftermath and central sensitization. British Journal of Health Psychology 2021; 26: S44–S52.

93. Rassu FS, McFadden M, Aaron RV, et al. The relationship between neighborhood deprivation and perceived changes for pain-related experiences among US patients with chronic low back pain during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pain Medicine 2021; 22: 2550–65.

94. Smyrnioi ME, Lyarakos G, Meindani M, Matsota P, Kostopanagiotou G, Batistaki C. The impact of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic on patients' perceptions of chronic pain. Journal of Pain Research 2021; 14: 2571–81.

95. Steptoe A, Di Gessa G. Mental health and social interactions of older people with physical disabilities in England during the COVID-19 pandemic: a longitudinal cohort study. Lancet Public Health 2021; 6: e365–e73.

96. Flowers KM, Colebaugh CA, Hruschak V, et al. Introversions buffers pandemic-related increases in chronic pain. Journal of Pain 2021; 22: 611–2.

97. Geneen LJ, Moore RA, Clarke C, Martin D, Colvin LA, Smith BH. Physical activity and exercise for chronic pain in adults: an overview of Cochrane reviews. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2017; 4: CD0011279.

98. McCarthy H, Potts HWW, Fisher A. Physical activity behavior before, during, and after COVID-19 restrictions: longitudinal smartphone-tracking study of adults in the United Kingdom. Journal of Medical Internet Research 2021; 23: e23701.

99. Yang Y, Koenigstorfer J. Determinants of physical activity maintenance during the Covid-19 pandemic: a focus on fitness apps. Translational Behavioral Medicine 2020; 10: 1354–42.

100. Yu L, Kioski K, McCracken LM. The psychological functioning in the COVID-19 pandemic and its association with psychological flexibility and broader functioning in people with chronic pain. Journal of Pain 2021; 22: 926–39.

101. Lee H, Punt JA, Patel J, Stojanovic MP, Duszynski B, McCormick ZL. Do corticosteroid injections for the treatment of pain influence the efficacy of adenovirus vector-based COVID-19 vaccines? Pain Medicine 2021; 22: 1441–64.

102. Deepak P, Kim W, Paley MA, et al. Effect of immunosuppression on the immunogenicity of mRNA vaccines to SARS-CoV-2 in a prospective cohort study. Annals of Internal Medicine 2021; 174: 1572–85.

103. Furer V, Eviatar T, Zisman D, et al. Immunogenicity and safety of the BNT162b2 mRNA COVID-19 vaccine in adult patients with autoimmune inflammatory rheumatic diseases and in the general population: a multicentre study. Annals of Rheumatic Diseases 2021; 80: 1330–8.

104. Yildiz N, Sever L, Kasapcoglu O, Čuğul F, Arsoy N, Çalışkan S. Hepatitis B virus vaccination in children with steroid sensitive nephrotic syndrome: immunogenicity and safety? Vaccine 2013; 31: 3309–12.

105. Aikawa NE, Campos LM, Silva CA, et al. Glucocorticoid: major factor for reduced immunogenicity of 2009 influenza a (H1N1) vaccine in patients with juvenile autoimmune rheumatic disease. Journal of Rheumatology 2012; 39: 167–73.

106. Fischer L, Gerstel PF, Poncet A, et al. Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine in adults undergoing immuno-suppressive treatment for inflammatory diseases—a longitudinal study. Arthritis Research and Therapy 2015; 17: 151.

107. Johnson JR, Denis R, Lucas CE, et al. The effect of steroids for shock on the immune response to tetanus toxoid. American Surgeon 1987; 53: 389–91.

108. Fairchok MP, Trentonzi DP, Carter PS, Regnery HL, Carter ER. Effect of prednisone on response to influenza virus vaccine in asthmatic children. Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine 1998; 152: 1191–5.

109. Park CL, Frank AL, Sullivan M, Jindal P, Baxter BD. Influenza vaccination of children during acute asthma exacerbation and concurrent prednisone therapy. Pediatrics 1996; 98: 196–200.

110. Sadoff J, Gray G, Vandeboesch A, et al. Safety and efficacy of single-dose Ad26.COV2.S vaccine against Covid-19. New England Journal of Medicine 2021; 384: 2187–201.

111. Mbaeyi S, Oliver SE, Collins JP, et al. The advisory committee on immunization Practices’ interim recommendations for additional primary and booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines—United States, 2021. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2021; 70: 1545–52.

112. Naranbhai V, Perrie CA, Gavralidis A, et al. Immunogenicity and reactogenicity of SARS-CoV-2 vaccines in patients with cancer: the CANVAX cohort study. Journal of Clinical Oncology 2022; 40: 12–23.

113. Khan N, Mahmud N. Effectiveness of SARS-CoV-2 vaccination in a veterans affairs cohort of patients with inflammatory bowel disease with diverse exposure to immunosuppressive medications. Gastroenterology 2021; 161: 827–36.

114. Stuck AE, Minder CE, Frey FJ. Risk of infectious complications in patients taking glucocorticosteroids. European Journal of Internal Medicine 2021; 88: 159–63.

115. Galimberti F, McBride J, Cronin M, et al. Evidence-based best practice advice for patients treated with systemic immunosuppressants in relation to COVID-19. Clinics in Dermatology 2020; 38: 775–80.

116. McKean D, Chung SL, Fairhead R, et al. Corticosteroid injections during the COVID-19 pandemic: experience from a UK centre. Bone and Joint Open 2020; 1: 605–11.

117. Papp KA, Harauzi B, Kumar D, et al. Vaccination guidelines for patients with immune-mediated disorders on immunosuppressive therapies. Journal of Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery 2019; 23: 50–74.

118. Fiore AE, Uyeki TM, Broder K, et al. Prevention and control of influenza with vaccines: recommendations of the advisory committee on immunization practices (ACIP), 2010. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2010; 59: 1–62.
119. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices’ Interim Recommendation for Use of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, December 2020. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6950e2.htm (accessed 15/02/2022).

120. Lynch ME, Williamson OD, Banfield JC. COVID-19 impact and response by Canadian pain clinics: a national survey of adult pain clinics. Canadian Journal of Pain 2020; 4: 204–9.

121. Whaley CM, Pera MF, Cantor J, et al. Changes in health services use among commercially insured US populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Journal of the American Medical Association Network Open 2020; 3: e2024984.

122. Chow RM, Rajput K, Howie BA, Varahhatla N. The COVID-19 vaccine and interventional procedures: exploring the relationship between steroid administration and subsequent vaccine efficacy. Pain Practice 2021; 21: 966–73.

Supporting Information
Additional supporting information may be found online via the journal website.

Appendix S1 Search strategy for Medline database.