



## Tools for patients to describe their pain – A scoping review

One in five people in Canada lives with chronic pain. During their lifetime, many others will visit a healthcare practitioner for an acute pain condition such as a heart attack, broken bone, or panic attack. Effectively communicating the multidimensional aspects of pain is integral to reducing its negative impacts and improving health outcomes. Unfortunately, effective communication on the part of the person in pain can be negatively affected by numerous factors, including increased cognitive load during a crisis, unfamiliar technical jargon, limited language proficiency, unfamiliar cultural norms, and increased cognitive load due to existing health issues or prior healthcare experiences. Efforts should focus on empowering individuals with the tools to clearly express their pain, ultimately improving communication in pain management against the backdrop of the existing unequal healthcare practitioner-patient power dynamic.

This scoping review aims to identify and summarize communication tools that enable people with pain to effectively communicate the nature of their pain to healthcare practitioners. Patient partner researcher Kristie Nicol and academic researcher Linda Li co-led this project, with support from another patient partner and two additional academic researchers. This scoping review aims to expand the body of knowledge regarding pain communication tools, their dimensions, and evaluation methods. These results can support healthcare practitioners' best practices for using existing pain communication tools and help develop meaningful patient-oriented tools.

### Kristie Nicol, BSc

#### Patient and Public Partner, SPOR Evidence Alliance

Kristie combines her science, GIS, and technical communication backgrounds to help design clear and accessible content. Her life with complex chronic health conditions gives strength to her word choices and design decisions that help educate, support, and empower users.



### Linda Li, PhD

#### Professor, Department of Physical Therapy, University of British Columbia; Senior Scientist, Arthritis Research Canada

Dr. Linda Li is a professor and Harold Robinson/Arthritis Society Chair in Arthritic Diseases at the Department of Physical Therapy, University of British Columbia and holds a Canada Research Chair in Patient-oriented Knowledge Translation. She is also a senior scientist at Arthritis Research Canada, leading the Arthritis & Implementation Science Program. Her research focuses on integrating wearables and apps to support health professionals in promoting physical activity and chronic disease self-management. Her work in implementation science includes studying strategies for engaging people with lived experiences in the research process. Linda is a recipient of the American College of Rheumatology – Association of Rheumatology Professionals (ARP) Distinguished Scholar Award (2015) and the ARP Distinguished Educator Award (2022), recognizing her leadership in both arthritis research and education. In 2019, she was inducted as a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.

