

Online Supplementary Material

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<http://www.annfammed.org/content/11/6/527>

Supplemental Appendix. Boxes 1 Through 6: Quotations

Box 1. Passively Received Influences Upon Attitudes and Beliefs About Low Back Pain

Media

- Had an understanding that you had to look after your back, and yeah, I assume it was round that time there was those- was it don't use your back like a crane ads on TV, so I knew about bending knees and that sort of thing (CLBP10)
- They had all the posters that were in the bus shelters, saying you know, "if you've got back pain, how about you try and walk to the next bus stop." Um, that'll help. And you had that whole staying active thing. And I had that in my mind (ALBP02)

Family and Friends

- It's quite renowned in our family. Back problems...I think that's just something you've got to be really careful about.... Just got to be cautious (ALBP05)
- It just kind of scares me a bit, 'cause it looks horrible (ALBP09)
- [I was worried about] some sort of collapse.... I've got a family history of osteoporosis, and fractures (ALBP06)
- My father had back pain and stuff as well, and he's still very active in his seventies...he was probably at his worst when he was in his forties, so I don't have this great expectation that life just gets worse with this lower back pain (ALBP04)
- I have a friend who has kind of chronic back pain, and he's unable to sit for long periods comfortably, so like um road trips in the car was quite, um, hard on him, and so I guess I was kind of imagining that my life might become like that, so that was quite, um, worrying (ALBP08)

Previous Low Back Pain Experience

- Hospitalized probably for about five days at that time, and then having quite a lengthy recovery...probably it, you know, made me more aware of back health and stuff like that (ALBP04)
- ... 'cause that other time that I did, I—it was really bad, and I did hurt it, um, and it came right. And it came perfectly right (ALBP12)

ALBP = acute low back participant; CLBP = chronic low back pain participant.

Supplemental Appendix, *continued*

Box 2. Uncertainty and Seeking Certainty

Uncertainty Associated With Back Pain

- I don't—don't really know enough (ALBP01)
- One day it just got really, really painful, and I was just like, "oh gosh," you know, "I don't really know what's going on" (ALBP07)

Seeking Certainty

Aim

- What's actually going on inside my back (ALBP01)
- Exactly what's wrong with it, and yeah, how to deal with it. And um, how to prevent it from happening again (ALBP05)
- Where it's leading, how long it will take to be better (ALBP03)

Hierarchy

Internet

- I just read all these really weird things, and it just freaked me out.... I was, like, "okay, this is not helping me at all." So I stopped looking at the Internet (ALBP02)
- I've learned a bit on line (CLBP04)
- Often things that would scare me, then I'd just turn it off and not want to know anymore (CLBP05)

Family and friends

- A friend who's had same disc problem, she's very helpful, you know, somebody who's been through it (CLBP04)
- Everyone kind of has their own ideas of, like, what you should do (ALBP07)
- A lot of them said, "You need physio" (ALBP06)
- I've talked to just friends, and stuff, and then I went to the doctor because it was getting worse quite quickly (ALBP09)

Health care professionals

- I guess I have to wait, though, for a physio to say something, or a doctor, yeah (ALBP02)
- I have no idea what I should or shouldn't be doing. And that's where I'd hoped the doctor kind of would- or the physio that I'm seeing on Friday would have some advice... so that I don't develop a chronic back problem (ALBP08)
- I put myself in the hands of the doctor, and I have faith in the doctor, and I am willing to go by their advice (CLBP10)
- I've been on line. Yeah, and, and read stuff. But I'm more of a, um—like to sit one-on-one and someone explain things (CLBP07)

ALBP = acute low back participant; CLBP = chronic low back pain participant; physio = physiotherapist.

Supplemental Appendix, *continued***Box 3. Health Care Professionals' Influence Upon Symptoms Evaluation and Prognosis****Source**

- They said it was probably just swollen muscles. And that when the muscles swell up, it causes increasing pain.... I just assumed it was cause the running and the jarring, and that's what's made it swell up (ALBP11)
- She just said, you know, "I think you've slipped a disc," in more fancy physio terms than that...I kind of knew that [a slipped disc] was the case all along, I mean that's what my physio had always said (CLBP05)
- I thought stress had a lot to do with it...I ended up in hospital, and then I was told, well, I do have a physical injury there. And see I was kind of relieved in a way. Cause I [had] started thinking that my back pain was related to my head (CLBP07)

Evaluation

- I was put in a back brace for 12 months...the surgeon I was under at the time, cause all I'd had was [a] CT scan, reckoned I had shattered a disc, and that whichever way I moved, different parts bulged.... I actually got scared in the end to actually move, yep, because I was immobilized for so long I thought that was the treatment, and if I moved I was going to make the pain worse [therefore subsequent pain indicated] obviously I'd done some horrible injury...you get your movement, and it'll bulge out through the tear (CLBP02)

Prognosis

- My osteo did say to me, she said, "Look, I think you've got a six to twelve week injury." She says, "I think you'll find that January you'll probably look back and think, oh wow, I'm actually feeling quite good now," so there's a bit of reassurance, that this isn't, um, this isn't my life, you know, what I'm going through for the past four weeks isn't what—I shouldn't have an expectation that's just going to be my life forever.... I suppose in my own mind I have an expectation that I'll probably look back and—kind of January, and look back and think actually, I'm feeling quite good now (ALBP04)
- I think the chiropractor said that that could happen, and you might not have any problems ever again...which made me feel better. So that was good advice (ALBP12)
- [The orthopedic specialist] said to me, "If I had my way, I would not let you have been a nurse," because I have a sway back, and he said to me basically I will have problems with my back forever, as it happens he was completely right...might have been part of my decision to leave nursing. I'm not quite sure if it was a conscious one, but, um, certainly that, yeah, I think that might have been a subconscious part of the reason that I left (CLBP03)
- [The physiotherapist] said to me. "Look, this is probably going to be a recurring problem for you, it's not something that just goes away."...I know it's not something that will ever go away completely. And that's sometimes quite difficult to deal with. I mean things like, yeah, being able to pick up children and that sort of thing, I mean I know there are certain things that I'll never be able to do, which can be a bit hard sometimes (CLBP05)

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Supplemental Appendix, *continued*

Box 4. Messages From Health Care Professionals Interpreted as the Back Needing Protection

Muscles

- They just basically said that because of my hypermobility, that I've just got a really unstable spine. Just really unstable joints in general, and I'll always have to work to kind of keep those muscles firing to hold things in place (CLBP05)
- If the spine, and all the nerves and stuff aren't supported by a good set of muscles around it, it could just be easier for me to injure myself in the future (CLBP08)
- Do the appropriate physical exercises and strengthening and yada yada that the physios taught me.... I don't have good abdominal strength, which I think puts strain on the back (CLBP01)

Posture

- I was kind of told that it was more just a poor posture thing. Just from slouching and things...I imagine just putting strain on a certain part of your back for too long (ALBP09)
- It's not straight, it's not arched, it's not the position that would be protective of my spine, and that's what I've been told by other physios and um—professionals (CLBP01)
- My physio who I see now, when I first sat down on the chair next to him on the office, was like horrified by my posture (CLBP08)

Avoidance Behaviors

Acute advice

- [The doctor] just said that I should rest for a few days, mainly. Avoid physical like exertion...I will definitely not lift anything heavy, or do anything that puts like excess load on my back for a while (ALBP09)
- Whenever I get that pain...it says to me that I'm—I immediately lie on my stomach. That's my first reaction, it tells me that I need to—um, I remember what my physio told me, and how she said, "if you lie on your stomach, it coaxes the disc back in."

Participant interpretation based upon health care professional's explanation

- [They said] some of the lower discs were perforated.... Certainly not trying to just bend over from the lower back to get something...probably compresses it in a way it doesn't really want, and compresses the discs (ALBP04)
- I've been told that my spine at the bottom, I stick my bum out too much, so I really need to be aware to tuck it in. And so maybe because it's a soft bed, like, I'm able to, you know, like, just arch it more...if I sleep on a bad bed, it'll screw up my back...I haven't slept in my bed [at parent's house] for like over a year now, cause I've just completely avoided it (ALBP07)
- [The chiropractor] was the one who got the x-rays done originally...he's the one who spotted a slight calcification build up, along one side...because of calcification and the degeneration of the bone, [it] would probably be quite uncomfortable for moving...that it would be kind of a grating type sensation anyway, so I probably wouldn't want to do it that much (CLBP06)

Health care professional initiated fear avoidance

- I think that [stoop lifting]'s bad for your back regardless of whether or not you've got a back problem. The couple of times that I've done it wrong, my physio's just gone [strangled inhalation], you know, "Argh, what are you doing?" I guess he's just trying to create habits of a lifetime (CLBP08)
- I'm often told that I do it the wrong way.... I tend to bend, and told not to do it that way, cause it loads your back.... [The physiotherapist] said that I need to crouch more, keep your back straighter, and not doing the leaning position where you're putting all your weight on your lumbar, all the strain on the lumbar area (CLBP02)
- They would sort of advise me as to what I should and shouldn't be doing...essentially just listening to my pain, and if it hurt, stop doing it...that I'd aggravate it, make it worse.... I know there are certain things that I'll never be able to do (CLBP05)

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Supplemental Appendix, *continued*

Box 5. Impact of Protective Advice From Health Care Professionals

Perceived Benefits

- That's kind of what sets me up for the day. And I don't know if that's just superstition or if it's actually based in any kind of scientific fact, but it, I mean it's worked (CLBP05)
- I was very fit, um, stronger, and I think it made me feel safe (CLBP03)

Vigilance

- I'm more aware of being very sure that I don't let those muscles relax (CLBP02)
- Just being aware, that's what I'm doing...constantly thinking about how your body, how you move your body and how the different parts relate (CLBP04)
- More attention to posture. But it's constant reminding, same with the breathing...it's the last thing you think-you want to think about, is posture and breathing, you've got so much other stuff to think about. Um, yeah, so it's just constant awareness (CLBP11)

Function

- I'll always, always, always [do my strengthening exercises]. Yeah. Definitely. I mean, even if I've been on the road and don't get home till 2 in the morning, I'll still do 15 minutes. Yeah. Even if I'm running late in the morning, and I'm going to be late, I'll still make sure I do a little bit (CLBP05)
- I have to adjust in the way that I stand, move, walk, which is really hard (CLBP11)

Guilt

- It's hard to resolve, I mean I'm a writer, you know, so that's what I do, I sit at a computer. And I like it. So, unfortunately, so I guess it's just...working out how to manage that, or get up enough, and I'm guilty of not doing it (CLBP04)
- I must admit, I don't put the effort into my own stretching and rehabilitative type things as I should (CLBP06)

Frustration

- I remember what my physio told me, and how she said, "If you lie on your stomach, it coaxes the disc back in." ...that's why I find this frustrating, cause I just have to lie there and do nothing.... I've been lying on my stomach for a couple of days now, and it just doesn't seem to be doing anything. And I really I want to move forward, and it's really frustrating me at the moment. I can't do anything (ALBP02)
- I lack that core strength...I sort of spend an hour a day working on it to keep things still, and still I get back pain. I mean that's just, that's just my physiology, I suppose (CLBP05)
- They've given me various very mild exercises that I do, and I do them. I've got a flatter stomach now, and stronger abs, I can feel them in there.... My pain has just got [sic] worse. It hasn't got better. As I've got stronger, it just hurts more (CLBP11)

Worry

- [The emergency department advice was] just do light duties at work...I guess cause they don't really want it to swell up as much. ...the time off work worries me...it means I've run out of sick pay, and, ah, you know, I just can't, I can't do the job, so I can't—there, I'm not getting paid, kind of thing (ALBP11)

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Supplemental Appendix, continued

Box 6. Activation and Reassurance

Activation

- Discussed with my osteopath whether that would be something that, um, should I do or I shouldn't do, and you know, the answer was, "No, no, you know, if you're careful, it can be really great for you" (ALBP04)
- She said, basically, "What we've got to get you to do is to get moving again...it's better to just get you pain free [with medication], so you can get on with your life...." I took [the medication] last Wednesday, I wasn't in that much pain, but I just took it cause I wanted to dance (ALBP07)
- I had planned a cycling trip in [continent] and this came just before it, I thought I was going to have to cancel it, but the physio was pretty encouraging and said, "No, you just, you have to get a bike that fits you, it actually could be helpful," and that's what I did, and it did, it did help (CLBP04)
- That's something which physios do, isn't it, like the first thing they do is try and get you moving again...keep things moving, okay. That's very important. Cannot emphasize that enough. Keep things moving (CLBP06)

Reassurance

- [The doctor] said it was fine, and I trust her, so that's good
- [The physiotherapist] did say to me, "You're not gonna, as long as you're not going all out, you're not gonna make it worse," (cause you do have that, you wonder, "will I, will it go squish more out?" or whatever) "as long as you're not doing anything stupid and you're working within your comfort zone, you're not, you'll be, oh, you know, you shouldn't make it worse." That's comforting (CLBP04)

Investigation

I had to get my spine x-rayed for that, just 'cause they suspected that I could have fractured something. But it was fine, it was just swelling, sprained...it was pretty relieving at the time, 'cause I thought I might have a broken back (ALBP09)

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