

**CareSearch Project**  
**Research Studies Register: Registration Proforma**

**0097**

**Study Title: What are the decision-making processes that underpin the self-management of persistent pain?**

**Brief description of the study:**

This study explored the decision-making processes that underpinned the self-management of persistent pain, and was inspired by the increasing interest in chronic disease prevention and the 2005 Australian Government's, 'National Chronic Disease Strategy'.

A Grounded Theory study explored the meaning decision-making had from the individual's perspective to understanding how self-management was achieved within a 'real world' environment. Thirteen participants from two different Queensland pain clinics were interviewed to reveal the findings. Most of the participants were middle-aged, unemployed women, and many had experienced neuropathic pain for at least 15 years.

Findings revealed that individuals transform into three distinct types of decision-makers, and undertake three styles of decision-making, in response to the many and varied problems related to the distressing experience of persistent pain and multiple losses. The experiences of persistent pain and sustaining multiple losses collectively caused disruption to the known self. Emerging from the disruption of the self were three distinct self-identities, the degenerating self, disconnecting self, and preserving self. Each self-identity was confronted by particular problems relevant to each distinct identity. In response to these diverse problems, three different decision-making styles became known; the impulsive, bargaining, and judicious decision-making styles. Each style of decision-making was defined and supported by a certain type of decision-maker, the susceptible, adaptive, and expert decision-maker. It was the collective processes of making decisions about the disruptive and life-changing experiences of persistent pain and multiple losses that precipitated the transformation of the deciding self. It was this transforming process that the individual redefined, situated, and distinguished the self from others, thus characterising the self as the decider and self-manager of pain.

In summary, the findings in this study have implications for the education and future practices of health professionals who assist in the management of persistent pain. These findings have also provided new information that will enhance the decision-making approaches undertaken by individuals who self-manage persistent pain.

**Study Methodology: (Please mark with an x which type of study methodology)**

	Epidemiology
	Health Services / Health Economics / Quality Improvement
<b>X</b>	<b>Qualitative, Observational or Descriptive</b>
	Mixed Method
	Systematic Review
	Intervention: RCT
	Intervention: Comparative or cohort study
	Intervention: Case series

**Project details:**

Funding source (Optional): QNC Novice Researcher Grant

Has the study received ethics approval?	<b>X</b>	Yes	No	Not applicable
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Project starting date: **2004**

Project completion date: **2007**

Multi site:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable
<b>RESEARCHERS</b>						
Principal Investigator (name)	<b>Dr Clare Fenwick</b>					
Contact Details	PO Box 1699, Oxenford, QLD 4210					
Investigator B (Name)	Professor Wendy Chaboyer					
Investigator C (Name)	Associate Professor Winsome St John					
Investigator D (Name)						
Investigator E (Name)						
<b>Associated publications / reports:</b>						
<b>Topics (Admin only) Pain, Patients</b>						