

FORECAST STUDY

Newsletter 5

The FORECAST Study: Factors Predicting the transition from acute to persistent pain in people with sciatica

STUDY NEWSLETTER 05: 1/4/24

STUDY UPDATE

A huge thank you to everyone who has taken part in the FORECAST study so far. As we draw close to completing recruitment we are building a very rich and detailed picture of sciatica, and the FORECAST team cannot wait to start making sense of this information as the study goes on.

In our fifth newsletter, we are delighted to introduce another of our collaborators, Professor Marco Barbero. Marco is an expert in the art and science of using Body Drawings in pain research, supporting FORECAST with making use of the body drawings all of our participants complete as part of the study. These drawings give us fascinating information about the location of different symptoms for each person, and Marco's novel digital approach to managing body drawings in research will help us to use this information alongside other data to build a more detailed picture of sciatica.

Working on FORECAST day-to-day



Prof. Annina Schmid
Study Lead



Lucy Ridgway
Study Co-ordinator



Soraya Koushesh
Research Assistant

Look out for more information about this in page 2, and for Marco's profile on the last page!

RECRUITMENT UPDATE

Recruitment continues at full pace and we are very close to finishing now.

Since our official study launch in May 2022, 170 participants have joined the study. We are aiming to recruit another 10 participants over the next few weeks, to reach our target of 180. We are also busily recruiting healthy volunteers (the same gender and age as our participants with sciatica) - please do pass on our details to any friends, family, and neighbours who might be interested!

Contact

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HEALTHY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We continue to look for people aged 30-85 (without back or leg pain) to join our 'healthy' group, so please do spread the word!



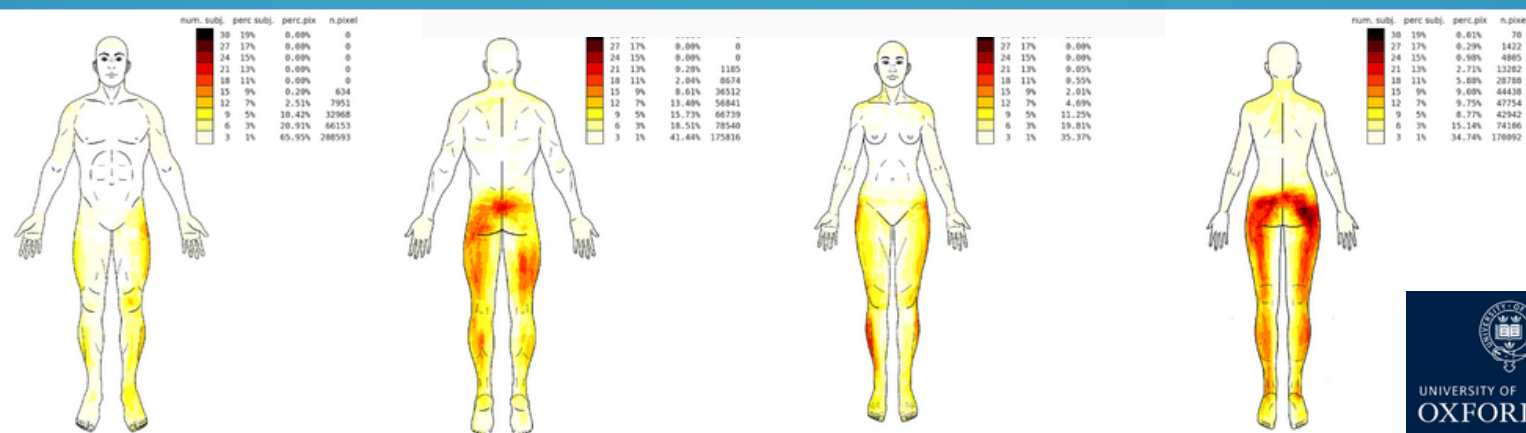
The Art and the Science: Using Body Drawings in Pain Research

Prof. Marco Barbero

In medical research, understanding and effectively treating pain remains a formidable challenge. The FORECAST study integrates an original and patient-friendly tool known as “Pain Drawing.” This technique changes how we capture and make sense of the intricate nature of pain, advancing our exploration of where each person’s pain is located on their body.

The sensory-discriminative dimensions of pain include four components: intensity, quality, location, and finally how they change over time. Using Pain Drawings allows patients to visually represent their painful location using cost-effective tools such as a pen and a few paper-body charts. These visual depictions create a map of the specific regions affected by pain and other symptoms, allowing researchers to analyze pain distribution in granular detail. By adopting this approach, we hope to gain valuable insights into the complexity and variability of pain experienced by patients with sciatica.

The integration of Pain Drawing within the FORECAST Project represents a significant step forward in terms of how we can capture and use information about pain location in research, particularly in longitudinal studies involving patients experiencing neuropathic pain. It isn't just about compiling body charts; it's a comprehensive approach that includes data extraction that will enrich the project. The standout feature of our method is the employment of an online digital platform, which not only digitizes but also anonymizes these pain illustrations, safeguarding patient privacy. The subsequent analysis, powered by sophisticated algorithms, is designed to shed light on the intricacies of sciatica, from its initial manifestation to the risk factors that could lead to a chronic condition.





Marco Barbero

Marco Barbero is Professor and Head of the Rehabilitation Research Laboratory (2rLab) at the Department of Business Economics, Health and Social Care of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI), and the Editor in Chief of the diamond open access journal Archives of Physiotherapy. After completing his physiotherapy degree at the University of Milan, he began his career as a clinician, focusing mainly on managing chronic spinal pain. Meanwhile, he enhanced his expertise by earning a Master's degree in Manual Therapy and Rehabilitation of Musculoskeletal Disorders at the University of Genoa. He completed his PhD at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, where he explored the spatial relationship between the distribution of myofascial trigger points and the innervation zone. His research involves the integration of neurophysiology and clinical practice to improve the treatment of musculoskeletal pain. He's also contributed to developing innovative outcome measures, enriching the understanding and evaluation of pain conditions, which aids in tailoring more precise treatment approaches.

A final reminder..... to please remember to complete your follow-up questionnaires!

We are eagerly collecting follow-up questionnaires as they come in, from the brief symptom report surveys once a month, to the longer questionnaires at three and twelve months, to shed light in detail on how sciatica behaves over time - these questionnaires are vitally important to our study and we are looking forward to reading all of the responses.

Spreading The Word

We are working to share information about **FORECAST** as widely as possible. If you are part of a community group (for example a club, society, religious organisation, college) that might be happy to display a study poster or two on their noticeboards, or to share some information via group chats and mailing lists we would love to hear from you.

Thank you for your help!