



NeuroMetrix Report Highlights Stigma Faced by Chronic Pain Community around Opioid Use, Desire for Alternative Treatments

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84 percent of Americans living with chronic pain believe there is a stigma around opioid use; 90 percent are actively seeking alternative treatments

WALTHAM, Mass., June 21, 2018 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- The opioid crisis continues to make headlines, but in the midst of this chaos, members of the chronic pain community are grappling with how to manage their conditions under increased scrutiny. In an effort to shed light on how the opioid epidemic is impacting the 100 million Americans living with chronic pain, [NeuroMetrix](#) today released a new report, "[Flipping the Script: Living with Chronic Pain amid the Opioid Crisis](#)." The report takes an in-depth look at the other side of the national crisis and how the stigma of opioid use is driving patient empowerment in the search for non-prescription treatments.

"The rise of the opioid epidemic has had a significant impact on those living with chronic pain, and oftentimes the voice of this population has gotten lost. We wanted to shine some light on the experiences of chronic pain sufferers with this research," said Shai N. Gozani, Ph.D., M.D., president and CEO of NeuroMetrix. "These results underscore the need for more research and treatment modalities to support those living with chronic pain, as well as a joint effort among care providers, innovators, government stakeholders and patients to expand the goals of pain treatment. If we shift focus to making the end goal of pain treatment about decreasing suffering and disability rather than exclusively pain intensity, we may open ourselves to new possibilities and treatments that will empower those with chronic pain to find relief and gain greater control over their lives."

NeuroMetrix, a commercial stage neurostimulation and digital medicine company and creators of [Quell Wearable Pain Relief Technology](#), partnered with Vanson Bourne to field the research, surveying 1,500 Americans (adults 25 and older) living with a wide range of chronic pain conditions. Most respondents indicated they are currently or have taken opioids for the treatment of chronic pain (62 percent). Key report findings include:

- **The opioid epidemic has created an unfair stigma for those living with chronic pain.** A majority of respondents (84 percent) believe a stigma exists, and as a result, 50 percent indicated they have lied or hidden their opioid use from others.
- **This stigma is affecting treatment of care.** More than a third (34 percent) had to stop taking opioids because their doctor no longer prescribed them, and 42 percent stated the stigma of opioid use has impacted how they communicate with their doctor about their pain.
- **There's a strong desire for alternatives to treat chronic pain.** The most common reasons for those living with chronic pain to seek other treatments are because they don't like the side effects of prescription medications (43 percent) and that they prefer to treat pain without prescription medication (39 percent).
- **There's a fracture in the doctor-patient relationship.** Fifty-nine percent of respondents said they don't believe their doctor is completely informed about treatment options outside of prescription drugs. Only 15 percent said their doctor has proactively suggested looking into alternative treatments.
- **Individuals living with chronic pain are taking treatment into their own hands.** Ninety percent of those living with chronic pain are actively seeking new treatment methods. When evaluating new treatments, respondents indicated that in addition to their doctor, feedback from friends and family (87 percent), online reviews (80 percent) and news coverage (73 percent) are increasingly influential sources.
- **The "one-size-fits-all" approach to treating chronic pain doesn't work.** Those with chronic pain use an average of two treatment methods regularly, and are comfortable trying new treatments, with 59 percent indicating they have tried new methods in the past year.

"There is no magic bullet for chronic pain, and people often have to employ multiple different therapies to achieve some relief," says Nicole Hemmenway, interim CEO of U.S. Pain Foundation. "Unfortunately, many patients find their options for relief are limited by affordability and accessibility. We need to do more to encourage insurers to provide better coverage to safe, alternative pain management approaches, like wearable devices."

To access the complete report, visit <https://www.quellrelief.com/flipping-the-script>.

Methodology

In early 2018, NeuroMetrix commissioned independent market research firm Vanson Bourne to interview 1,500 US consumers aged 25 years old and above. In order to qualify for the survey, respondents had to report currently suffering from chronic pain (defined as pain that lasts longer than three months). An even spread of responses were collected across age and gender. Interviews were conducted via online interviewing using a rigorous multilevel screening process to ensure that only suitable candidates were given the opportunity to participate.

About NeuroMetrix

NeuroMetrix is an innovation driven healthcare company combining neurostimulation and digital medicine to address chronic health conditions including chronic pain, sleep disorders, and diabetes. The company's lead product is Quell, an over-the-counter wearable therapeutic device for chronic pain. The company also markets DPNCheck[®], a rapid point-of-care test for diabetic neuropathy, which is the most common long-term complication of Type 2 diabetes. For more information, please visit [NeuroMetrix.com](#).

About Quell

Quell is an advanced, wearable technology for treating chronic pain. It can be worn during the day while active and at night while sleeping. Quell is drug-free and has been cleared by the FDA for treatment of chronic pain without a prescription. Quell users can personalize and manage therapy discreetly via the Quell app. Quell also offers health tracking relevant to chronic pain sufferers including pain, sleep, activity, and gait. Quell users can synchronize their data with the Quell Health Cloud, which provides customized feedback and powers one of the world's largest chronic pain databases. Quell is available online and through select retailers. Visit QuellRelief.com for more information.

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