

# Living everyday life in the shadow of pain or live everyday life with the pain in the shadow – a constant balancing

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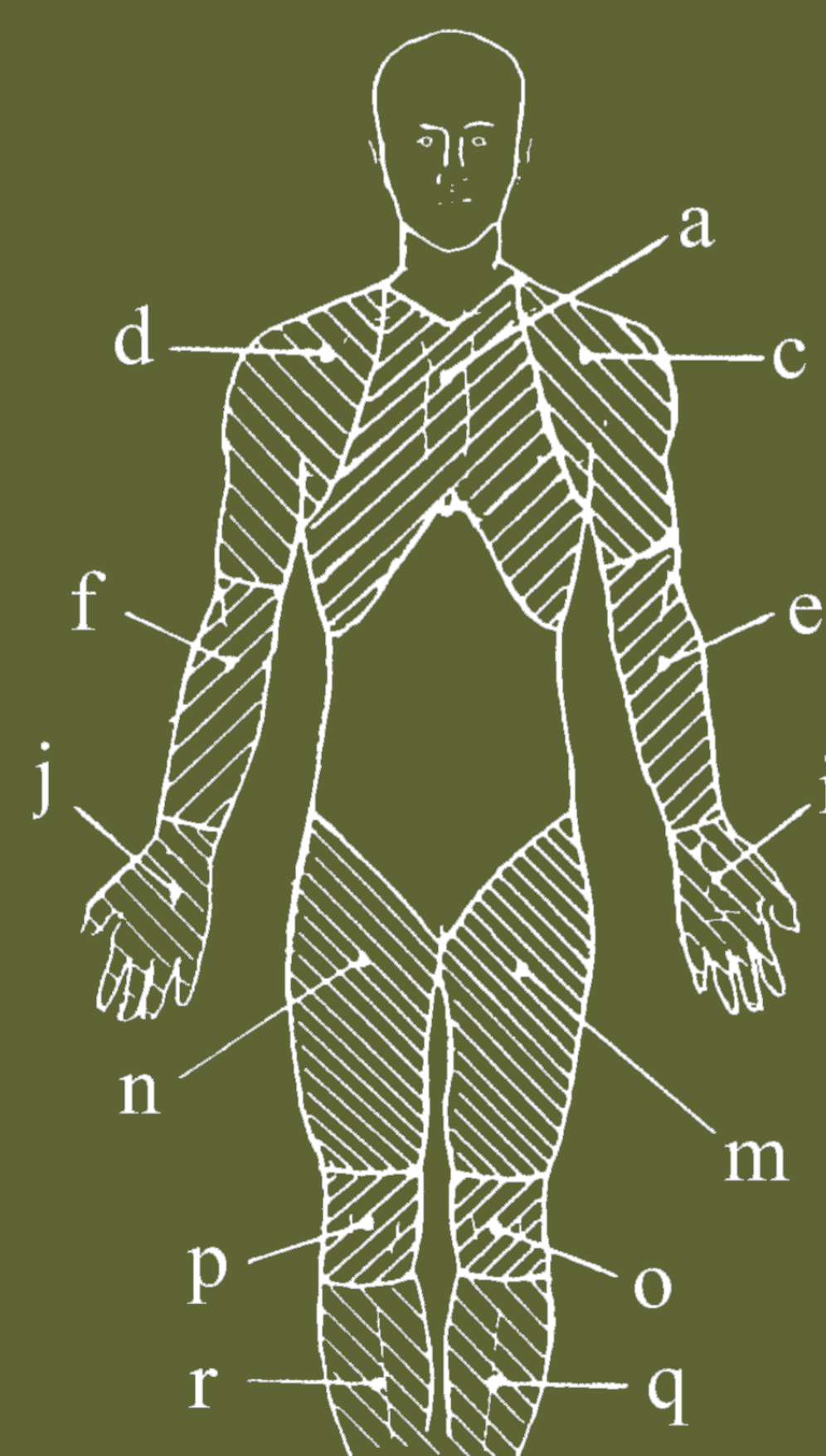
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### Conclusion:

Women with CWP have to deal with their physical, mental, social and spiritual environment in everyday life.

They express a constant balancing in their life between mastering the pain in order to continue living as normal or allowing the pain to set the terms, i.e. living everyday life in the shadow of pain or live everyday life with the pain in the shadow.

Healthcare professionals may consider supporting the patients in finding their individual counterweight to manage life in order to reach a better treatment outcome.



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### Background

Approximately 10% of the population report chronic widespread pain (CWP), the condition is more common in women than in men. Long-term pain is a public health problem. For most women, the pain interferes with many aspects of everyday life and implies large consequences.

### Objectives

To explore women’s experiences of how CWP influence their daily life.

### Methods

Individual interviews were conducted in 19 women 45-67 of age. See table 1. The main questions were: “Can you describe your experiences of living with CWP?” and “How do the CWP influence your life today?” A latent qualitative content analysis resulted in eight subthemes, three themes and a main theme represent the interpreted content of women’s experiences of how CWP influence their everyday life.

Table 1. Socio-demographic and clinical characteristics of the women (n=19) with CWP

Charateristics	Women (n=19)
<b>Age</b> Median (Range)	57 (45-67)
<b>Pain sites</b> Median (Range)	8 (4-16)
<b>Educational level</b>	
Primary school	2
Secondary school	12
University	5
<b>Employment</b>	
Working full or part time	13
Sick-leave	3
Retired	3
<b>Civil status</b>	
Married/cohabited	14
Single	5

### Results

A life with CWP was experienced as “Living everyday life in the shadow of pain or live everyday life with the pain in the shadow” including the experience of invisible challenges, limitations, and plasticity. See table 2.

The experiences of invisible challenges referred to;

- neglect - a feeling of being distrust and outwardly healthy
- loneliness - not being able to participate in social contexts

The experiences of limitations in daily life include;

- inability – e.g. fatigue limits the activities in everyday life
- stress - constitutes limitations in life
- dependent - of other people’ support

The experiences of plasticity referred to;

- resignation - refraining from activities that could affect the pain e.g. gardening, walking, and dancing
- adjustment - by making the best of the situation
- resistance - to resist letting the pain set the terms, to give the pain a fight

Table 2. Overview of main theme, themes and subthemes of the qualitative content analysis with women’s experiences of how CWP influence their daily life.

Main theme	Living everyday life in the shadow of pain or Live everyday life with the pain in the shadow		
<b>Themes</b>	Living with invisible challenges	Struggling with limitations	Facing daily life with plasticity
<b>Subthemes</b>	Feeling neglected as a person	Moving between ability and inability	Standing still and resign
	Feeling loneliness among other persons	Struggling with stress and worry	Moving back and forward through adjustments
Being dependent on others			Striving forward with resistance