1. INTRODUCTION
Arthritis is the most frequent cause of pain, and pain is the main reason people visit their GP.
Recent research has highlighted a demand for a new shorter self-management programme focused on pain.
In 2004, working in partnership with medical pain specialists in Plymouth, Devon, Arthritis Care staff developed a new pain-management workshop and manual called Challenging Pain.
Challenging Pain is aimed at people with chronic pain, and therefore of value to people with a wider range of conditions.
The workshop introduces participants to a variety of cognitive pain management techniques such as: relaxation, breathing techniques, communication skills and the benefits of exercise. It is designed as an adjunct to the care and support people with pain receive from their health specialists.
The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Challenging Pain.

2. METHOD
Participants were referred onto the programme by GPs, Pain Clinic Pain Education Programme waiting lists or through self-referral.
A total of 186 people with chronic pain participated in 18 workshops. Each workshop consists of 2.5 hour sessions delivered over 2 weeks by trained lay personnel that also live with chronic pain. The quality of workshop delivery was assured by no notice assessments.
Evaluations were conducted pre-workshop and at six and twelve months later using assessment tools and outcome measures adapted from Lorig’s work including questionnaires covering a variety of bio-psychological aspects of chronic pain and focus group discussions (Lorig et al 1999).

3. RESULTS
6-month follow-up questionnaire 158 (84.9%) participants completed.
12-month follow-up questionnaire 106 (67.1%) participants completed.
Using Wilcoxon signed rank tests the data indicates that after 12 months there are statistically significant changes in:
- Pain scores - were reduced 14%
- Average number of GP visits was reduced by 23%
- Health distress was reduced by 31%
- Self-efficacy was improved by 27%

4. CONCLUSIONS
This pilot study demonstrates that the Challenging Pain self-management intervention has a lot to offer chronic pain patients.
The results indicate that Challenging Pain significantly reduces health care visits and health distress while self-efficacy is improved and the changes are sustained at 6 and 12 months.
In comparison with the 6-week self-management programmes (Lorig et al 2001, Buszewicz et al 2006) this pilot study has shown the two-week programme is as effective.
Therefore the brevity and cost effectiveness of Challenging Pain are considerable strengths of the product.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS
An extended follow up and a larger study could yield more robust statistical data in support of Challenging Pain.
It is recommended that Challenging Pain is offered to patients with chronic pain as a cost effective pain management intervention within the patient’s health care pathway.

6. WANT TO KNOW MORE?
Challenging Pain is available throughout the UK; it can be delivered by Arthritis Care staff and trained volunteers or Arthritis Care can train your own patients or beneficiary groups.
For further details on direct commissioning of course delivery or self-delivery under license, please contact:
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