

Children with Cerebral Palsy's Experiences with Pain

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Pain and its prevention occupied significant space and energy in the lives of children with CP living with pain. A wide variety of experiences and challenges emphasized the need for tailored treatment strategies developed together with the child and their family.

Background

Children with cerebral palsy (CP) often suffer from different kinds of pain and pain may reduce their quality of life. To develop better treatment strategies, we need more knowledge of children's own lived experiences with pain.

Aim

Explore the children's experiences with pain, including its influence on their everyday life, and pain-related support.

Methods

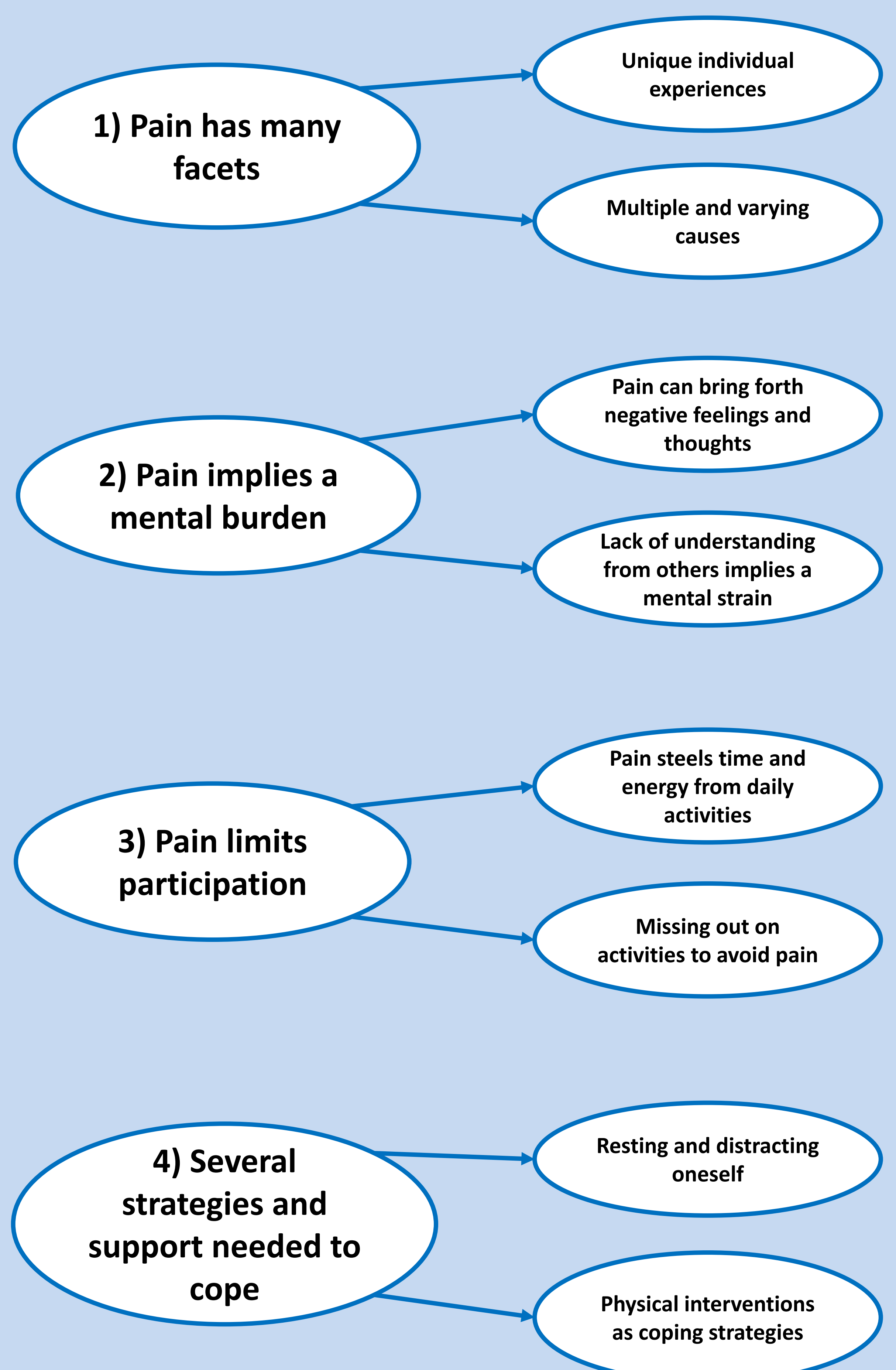
Fifteen children (8-17 years old) were recruited from the Habilitation Centers in two Norwegian counties, using a purposeful sampling strategy. They had varying experiences with pain and different degrees of physical and cognitive impairments. Seventeen individual semi-structured interviews were carried out. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using inductive thematic analysis.

Results

All children were able to describe their experiences with pain to some extent. Four themes were identified. 1) Their experiences regarding all aspects of pain varied. 2) Both the pain itself and cognitive strategies to cope with pain consumed significant mental energy. 3) They all had to make adjustments in their everyday life to avoid or reduce pain. 4) The children used rest and other strategies to manage pain, and primarily relied upon support from family and friends. The four themes and their accompanying sub-themes are illustrated in the figure to the right.

Themes and sub-themes

Pain caused limitations to all participating children, but to different extent. For some, it was always on their mind.



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