

Classification of chronic pain

Somatic

This could be superficial or deep pain arising from peripheral nociceptors. Low back pain has many pathologies involving several deep tissue types

- Myofascial pain
- Bone pain
- Vascular – ischaemic limb pain
- Back pain

Visceral

Often poorly localised with involvement of autonomic nervous system

- Abdominal pain
- Pelvic pain
- Thoracic pain

Inflammatory

Primary inflammatory disorders are often less responsive to opioid therapy

- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Osteoarthritis

Neuropathic

Primary disorders of dysfunction within the nervous system
Classically associated with symptoms of allodynia, hyperalgesia, hyperpathia, paraesthesia

- Painful diabetic neuropathy
- Postherpetic neuralgia
- Postsurgical neuropathic scar pain

Widespread

Patients with chronic widespread pain are more likely to have associated psychological disturbance, poor sleep hygiene, bowel irritability and fatigue

- Spectrum of presentations
- Fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue syndrome

Headache

Can be primary or secondary. There are numerous causes of secondary headache. Common groups are listed

- Tension
- Migraine
- Cluster
- Post head/neck trauma
- Analgesic withdrawal/overuse