Does pain catastrophizing in healthcare workers influence judgments of pain in palliative patients with delirium?

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Healthcare workers (HCWs) use behavioural expressions, or pain cues, as a basis for judging pain in palliative patients with delirium (Gagliese et al., 2016). We know that different factors influence the decoding and judgments of pain made by HCWs; however, more research is needed in this area. The objective of this mixed methods study is to investigate how pain catastrophizing – an exaggerated and negative mental set brought to bear during actual or anticipated painful experience – influences the frequency and type of pain cues HCWs use to judge pain in advanced cancer patients with delirium. Data collected from two larger studies researching delirium and cancer pain at the end of life will be used. A data collection meeting and an interview were conducted to gather Pain Catastrophizing Scale (PCS) scores and pain cues used to judge pain, respectively. Stratified Purposive Sampling, as well as Content Analysis, will be used to examine the relationship between pain catastrophizing and the frequency and type of pain cues HCWs use to judge pain in advanced cancer patients with delirium.