

# Living Well with Chronic Pain

## Ethel Carboni Jardim

Advanced Practice Physiotherapist |  
PhD Candidate | Centre for Health Services  
Studies, University of Kent | ARC KSS  
Studentship in Primary & Community Care  
[ec613@kent.ac.uk](mailto:ec613@kent.ac.uk)



**Supervisors**  
Dr Emma Veale  
Dr Julie Hedayioglu

## 01 Background

25% of the adult population in the UK lives with chronic pain – pain that persists for longer than 3 months and which for many affects every aspect of daily life. Most of the research in the field has focused on those who are struggling to cope, identifying, treating or managing symptoms that contribute to disability. Some, however, manage to find a way forward in life, despite living with persistent pain. Less is known about how these people can live well in the presence of pain and whether the strategies they adopt could be helpful for those who do not.

## 02 Aims

- To understand what ‘living well with chronic pain’ means to those with lived experience of chronic pain and HCPs with experience of pain management.
- To propose a definition of ‘living well with chronic pain’ from the perspective of those with lived experience.
- To understand the role of illness representations, meaning making and physical activity in living well with chronic pain.

## 03 Methods

This **mixed methods** study consists of 3 separate studies. **Study 1** involves a series of bespoke and validated online questionnaires to explore the relationship between illness representations, meaning making, and physical activity engagement when living well with chronic pain. Inferential tests and group analysis will be used to analyse this data. Semi-structured interviews will provide qualitative data about the experience of reaching a place of living well with chronic pain by those with lived experience (**Study 2**) and those HCPs who support them (**Study 3**). **Reflexive thematic analysis** will be used to analyse the qualitative data obtained.

## 04 Interim Results

- **Study 1** has had 166 participants, with 164 eligible responses. Preliminary results indicate that 65% of these respondents consider themselves to live well with chronic pain, while 14% were unsure and 21% felt they did not live well. Most of the participants, aged 18–76, were female (74%), white (91%) and based in England (96%). Further quantitative data analysis is planned to commence shortly.
- The convenience sample for **Study 2** consisted of 21 English-speaking volunteers and self-identifying as living well with chronic pain. They were aged 22–76, with the majority female (74%), white (82%) and living in England (87%). Qualitative analysis of the transcript data is underway to identify, analyse and develop themes obtained from verbatim transcripts. Figure 1 shows the codes being used to evaluate transcript data.
- **Study 3** will be open for recruitment in early 2026.

## 05 Conclusions

Interviews created a space for participants to reflect on their experience of achieving and maintaining a successful adjustment to life with chronic pain. Preliminary results add to the growing evidence that living a full and purposeful life with chronic pain is possible. Data also suggests the importance of the under-researched influence of altruism and finding meaning in life with chronic pain. Understanding these contributory factors has the potential for enhancing patient care and influencing clinical practice.

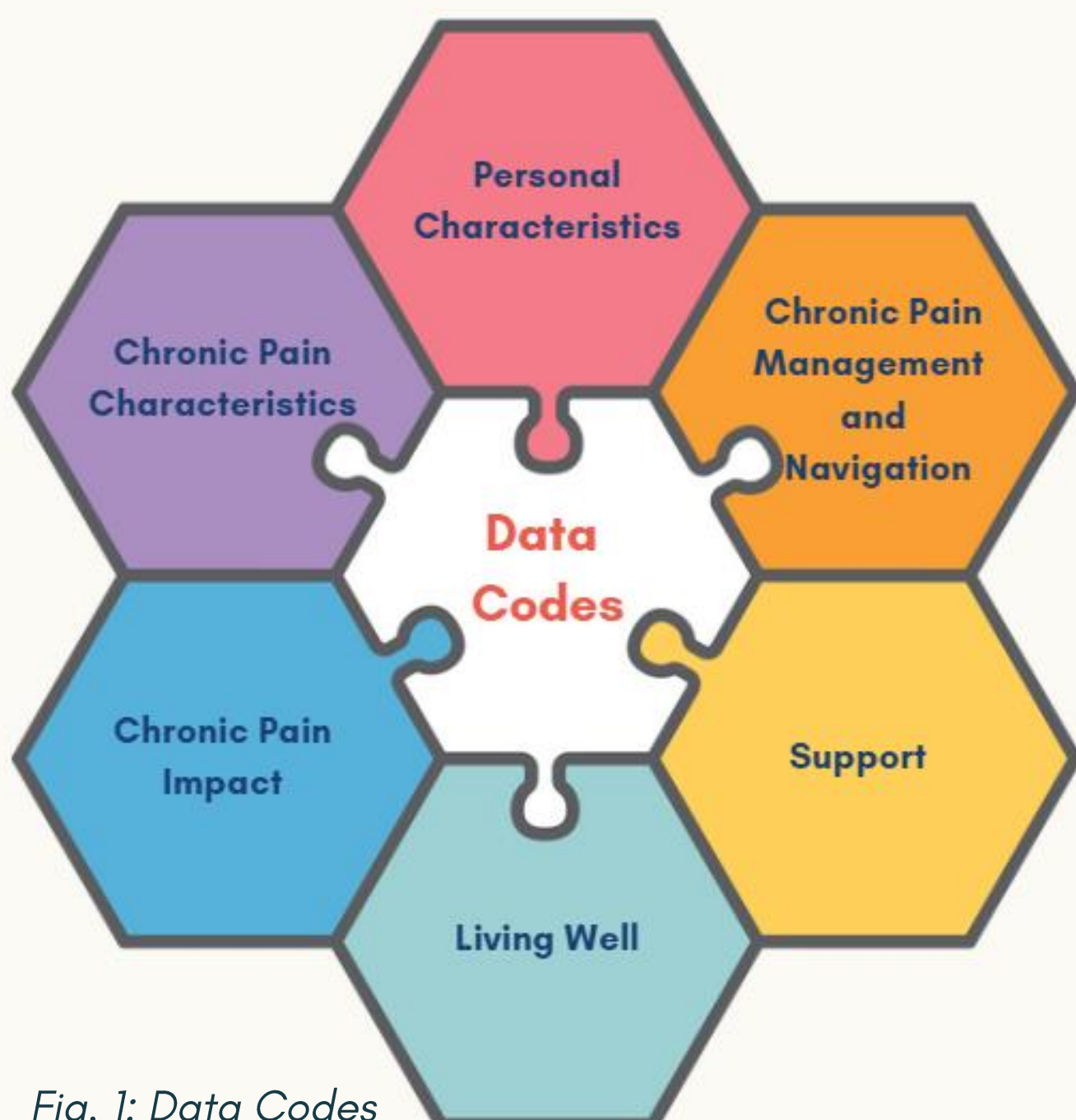


Fig. 1: Data Codes