

# The Collision of National Public Health Crises: Impact on [Pain-related] Clinical Care and Research Approaches/Challenges

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HEAL Investigator Meeting  
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# HEAL Supported Projects & Contributors

**RESOLVE**

Principal Investigator

Tailored Non-Pharmacotherapy Services for Chronic Pain: Testing Scalable and Pragmatic Approaches

UG3AG067493 / UH3AG067493  
NIA funded, NINDS scientific advisory support  
Pain Effectiveness Research Network- Pain ERN (HEAL Research Program)

**MI CARE**

Co-Principal Investigator

Patient-Centered Team-Based Primary Care to Treat Opioid Use Disorder, Depression, and Other Conditions

UF1MH121949  
NIMH funded & project scientific advisory support  
Optimizing Care for People with Opioid Use Disorder and Mental Health Conditions (HEAL Research Program)

**BACK IN ACTION**

Co-Principal Investigator

Pragmatic Trial of Acupuncture for Chronic Low Back Pain in Older Adults

UG3AT010739 / UH3AT010739  
NCCIH funded, NCCIH & NIA scientific advisory support  
Pragmatic and Implementation Studies for the Management of Pain to Reduce Opioid Prescribing – PRISM (HEAL Research Program)

# COVID Impacts on Applied Clinical [Pain] Trials: The Real Experts...



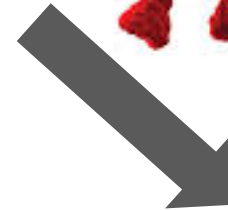
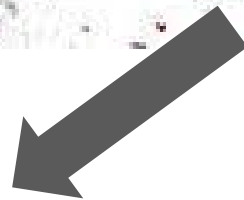
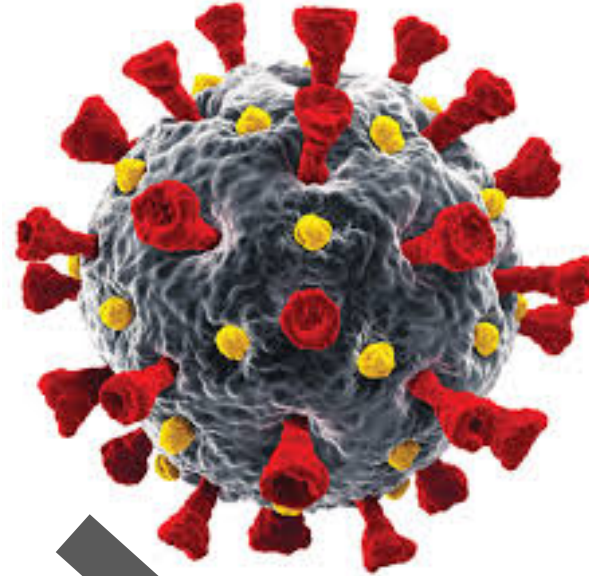
Topical Review

## PAIN®

### **Pivoting to virtual delivery for managing chronic pain with nonpharmacological treatments: implications for pragmatic research**

Julie M. Fritz<sup>a,\*</sup>, Alison F. Davis<sup>b</sup>, Diana J. Burgess<sup>c</sup>, Brian Coleman<sup>d</sup>, Chad Cook<sup>e</sup>, Shawn Farrokhif, Christine Goertz<sup>g</sup>, Alicia Heapy<sup>h</sup>, Anthony J. Lisi<sup>i</sup>, Donald D. McGeary<sup>j</sup>, Daniel I. Rhon<sup>k</sup>, Stephanie L. Taylor<sup>l</sup>, Steven Zeliadt<sup>m</sup>, Robert D. Kerns<sup>n</sup>

# Collision of Pandemics



**Stress and Behavioral  
Symptoms**

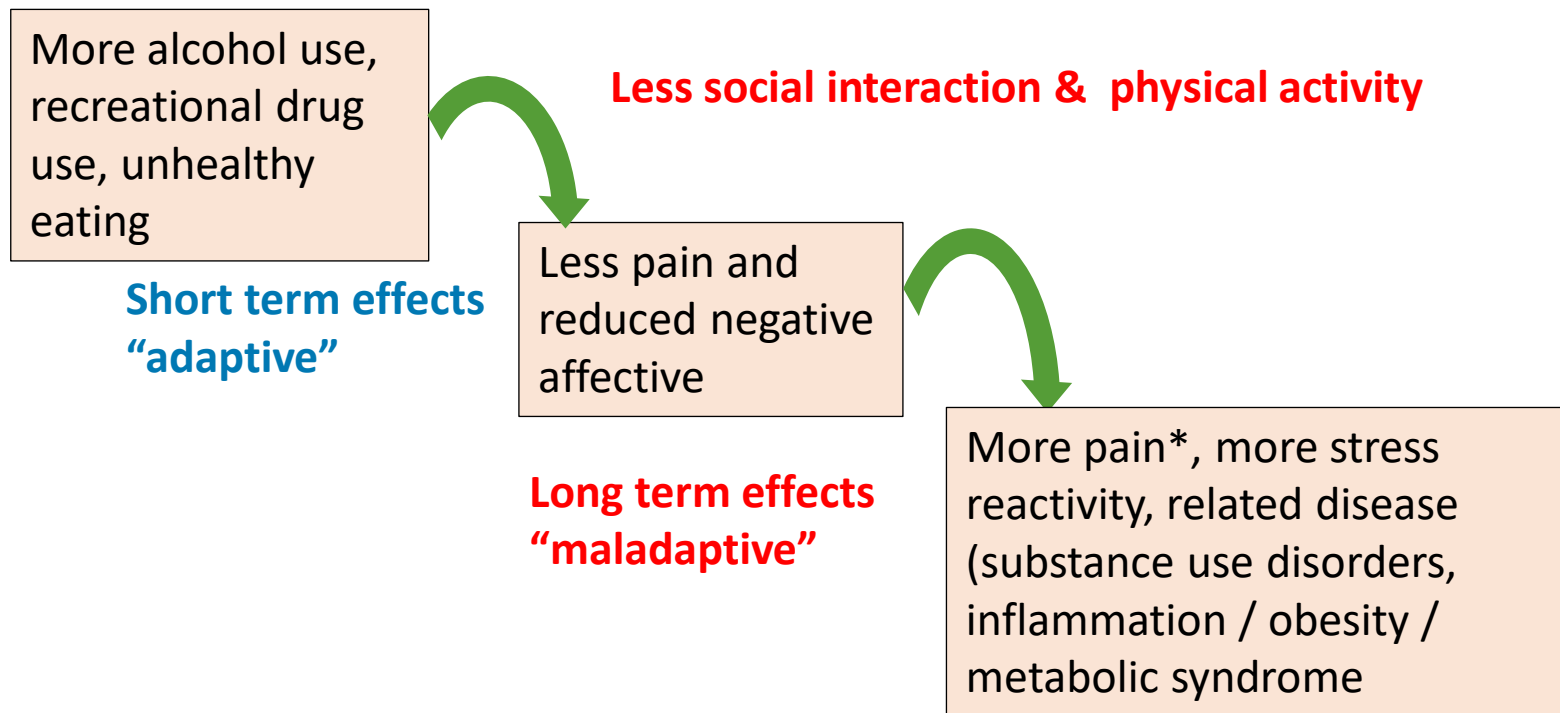
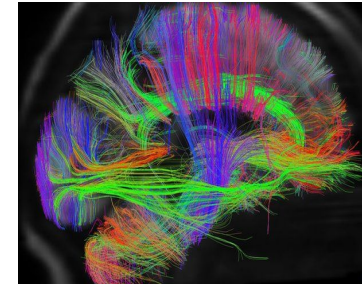
**Short term Behavioral  
Fixes with Downstream  
Impacts**

**(Enduring?)  
Changes in  
Clinical Care**

**(Enduring?)  
Changes in  
Research  
Approaches**

# Pain-related Symptoms & Behavioral Coping: COVID Impacts

- 11% → 42% (before vs. during pandemic) US reported anxiety / depression symptoms (Nature, Feb 2021)
- 10% of US seriously considered suicide in past 30 days (CDC, 2020)
- 15% of US started/increased substances to cope with COVID (CDC, 2020)

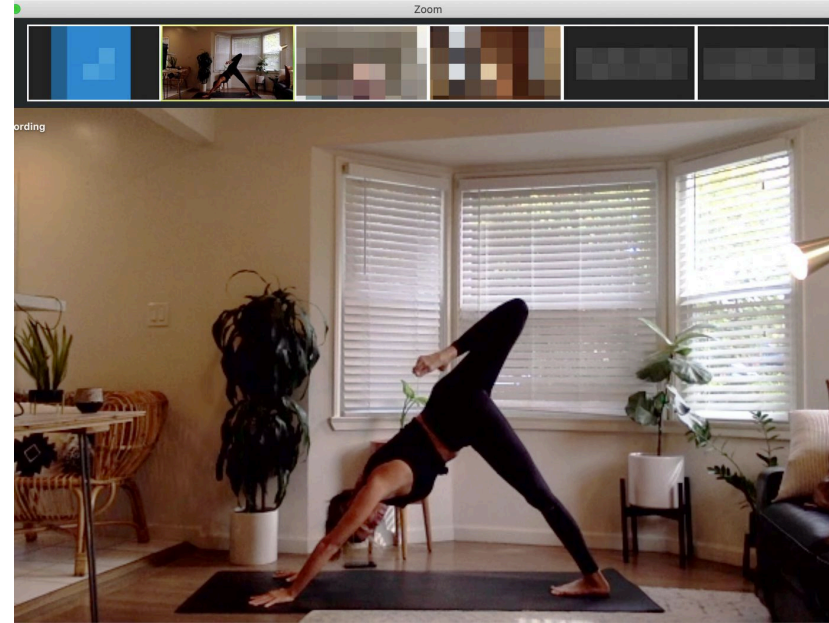


\* Includes impact of remodeling of pain and reward circuitry in brain

\*Courtesy of Frank Keeffe

# Changing the Landscape of [Pain-related] Clinical Care

- Virtual delivery of nonpharmacological treatments (NPT)
- (including) Technology driven remote interventions (e.g., IVR & VR-based pain treatments)



- Lowered regulatory and payment barriers to telehealth related services
- But, risk of exacerbating health disparities (digital divide)
- More counter demand for touch-based therapies?

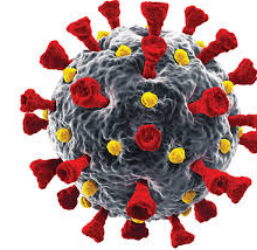


# Changing the Landscape of Research...

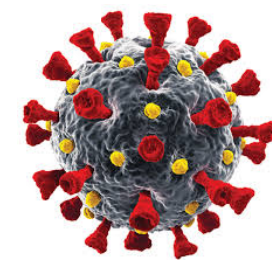
- **Characterizing your comparison condition: The evolving nature of usual care (including more “*weak [NPT] inoculation*”\*)?)**
- **Assessment and analysis of time-varying [COVID] predictors of outcome**



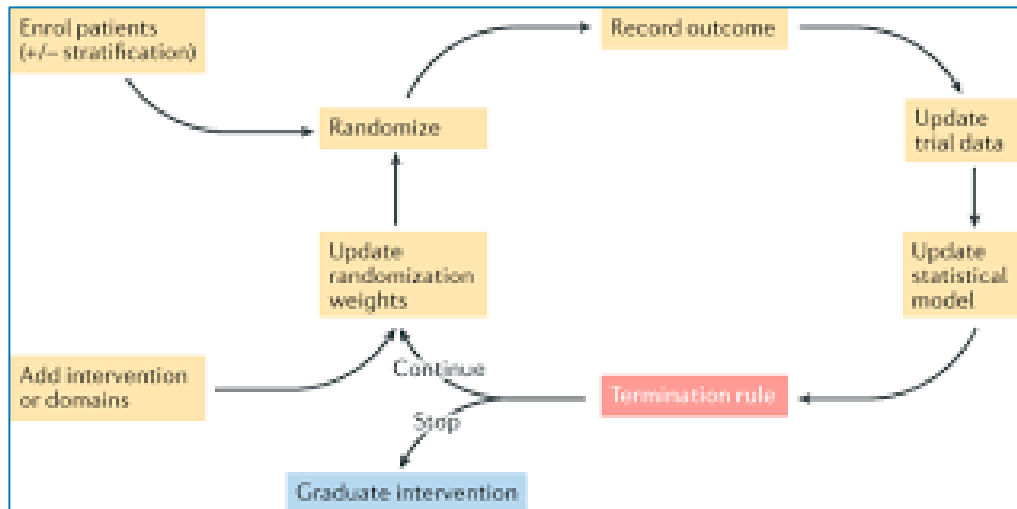
COVID EXPOSURE  
OR INFECTION



COVID IMPACT



≠



- **Learning from [infectious disease] research: e.g., Adaptive (platform) trials**

\* “Weak Inoculation” Courtesy of Kurt Kroenke

# Further issues / looking forward...

- Ensure access to and tailoring of pain-related interventions to reach more diverse populations and address health inequities
- More attention to needs at the interface of the treatment of chronic pain, opioid use disorder, and other common comorbid mental health and substance use problems (IMPOWR HEAL RFA)
- **Positive potential impact of**
  - **easing of restrictions that may increase access to opioid treatment services (elimination of the X-Waiver for buprenorphine)**
  - **allowing better coordination of health care services and ability to conduct clinical research (changes to substance abuse treatment records in 42 CFR Part 2)**
- **Grappling with consequences of fentanyl and methamphetamine tainted street drugs (depression treatment challenge for those with meth exposure?)**
- **More attention to recognizing / addressing profound role of stigma in understanding / seeking care for chronic pain and substance use problems**



# It Takes a Village...

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