Zusammenfassung der Master-Thesis von
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Course of Back Pain across five years.
A retrospective cohort study in the general population of Switzerland

Objective: To investigate the course of back pain across five years and the impact of back pain history on incidence and recurrence.

Methods: The study sample consisted of persons with a complete five-year annual follow-up within the Swiss Household Panel, a representative population-based cohort study. The question analyzed in the present study asked about „bad back or lower back problems at least once a month in the last 12 months (BP)". One-year BP prevalences, incidences and recurrences were calculated separately and dependent on the number of preceding years with constant BP status. All possible BP courses were described by frequency distribution and analyzed by number of years with BP, trend across five years, and constancy.

Results: In the study sample (N=3881, 49.8% of the Swiss Household Panel cohort, age 44.0 ± 15.6 years, 57.7% female), BP prevalence was 33.2% at baseline. In the follow-up surveys, prevalence was between 37.0% and 38.5%, incidence between 17.7% and 21.9%, and recurrence between 66.0% and 72.0%. The most frequently observed courses were those with a constant status: BP always absent (N=1346, 34.7%, age 42.3 ± 15.3 years, 52.2% female), or BP always present (N=538, 13.9%, age 48.9 ± 15.3 years, 69.3% female). BP recurrences increased with increasing numbers of previous consecutive years with BP from 46.9% (one year of previous BP) to 88.1% (at least four years of previous BP).

Conclusion: BP history is highly predictive for future BP episodes. Given the extremely recurrent nature of BP, primary prevention must be given top priority.