1. **Conceptualizing Pain in Ayurvedic Protocols for Chronic Pain Management: A Case**

**Study of Ayurvedic Physicians from India**

**Global Approaches of Integrative Oncology**

**Background:** Globally, about one in five or about 1.5 billion people suffer from chronic pain

(Goldberg & McGee, 2011). Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies are

increasingly sought by chronic pain patients and used in integrative settings to treat chronic pain

syndromes (Eisenberg et al., 2001; Sherman et al., 2004). However, gaps in the distinct medical

systems risk appropriation of practices decontextualized from their philosophical knowledge

base (Agarwal, 2017; Naraindas, 2005; Street et al., 2018) and suggest a need for greater

conceptual alignment of diagnostic and treatment approaches for their successful integration.

**Aim**: To conceptualize the nature of pain with diet, time, and mental strength in Ayurvedic

physician pain protocol approaches.

**Methodology**: Participants: Ayurvedic physicians (N=10) from India were recruited through

purposive and snowball sampling. A semi-structured interview protocol was employed to gather

data and participant interviews were audio-recorded, professionally transcribed verbatim, and

analyzed using grounded theory. Member validation, participant voice, and researcher self awareness of limitations helped address reliability and validity concerns.

*Desired Outcomes:* To construct a thematic framework of Ayurvedic physicians’ conceptualization of the synergistic relationship between diet, time, and mind-body factors in alignment with the patient, the condition, and the environment in treatment of chronic pain.

**Results**: Pain is conceptualized as embodied through its relationship with: (a) daily and seasonal

time cycles, (b) individual energy balance (*dosha*s) and diet, and (c) mental strength.

**Analysis**: Primary outcomes: Pain is conceptualized in the Ayurvedic physicians’ approach as

embodied through the individual’s relationship with time as interdependent with their diet,

*dosha*s, and mental strength. Ongoing challenges: Identifying and constructing diagnostic criteria

of embodiment that can be used in integrative teams.

**Conclusions**:Embodiment can be a useful first step in constructing protocols for identifying the

categories of time, diet, and mental strength for the individual patient in the context of their

lifestyle.

*Author note:*

\*The study was supported by an institutional *Building Research Excellence* grant.

\*Part of the study data is accepted for presentation at the 70th Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association on May 22, 2020, Gold Coast, Australia. **Agarwal, V.** (May, 2020). *Nature, Cycles, and Balance in Ethnomedicine: Ayurvedic Protocols in the* *Treatment of Chronic Pain.* 70th International Communication Association Conference, Melbourne, Australia