

Low back pain epidemiology

Low back pain is the single most common cause for disability in individuals aged 45 years or younger and as a result carries tremendous weight in socioeconomic considerations.

In Western Europe, Low back pain (LBP) is considered to have the greatest burden of disease for society ¹⁾.

One of the countervailing issues is that epidemiologically, spinal degenerative disease and particular low back pain are most prevalent amongst [musculoskeletal disease](#). Nearly 100% of all adults end up with spinal problems at least once during their lifetime, with a point prevalence of 4%-33% ²⁾.

In the U.S., acute low back pain is the fifth most common reason for physician visits. About nine out of ten adults experience back pain at some point in their life, and five out of ten working adults have back pain every year.

Low back pain causes 40% of missed days of work in the United States.

A significant majority of patients discharged from hospitals in the US from 1998 to 2007 with a primary diagnosis of LBP were admitted through the emergency room (ER), with more patients being admitted via this route each year. These patients were less likely to be discharged directly home compared with patients with LBP who were not admitted through the ER. Uninsured and African American patients with LBP were more likely to be admitted through the ER than their counterparts, as were patients with more preexisting health problems. Interestingly, patients with LBP at the highest income levels were more likely to be admitted through hospital ERs. The findings suggest that socioeconomic factors may play a role in the utilization of ER resources by patients with LBP, which in turn appears to impact at least the short-term outcome of these patients ³⁾.

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³⁾

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