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A Deep Dive into the Relationship between Sleep Deprivation and Pain Perception: A Cross-Population Analysis

Adam T. Friedman
Rowan University

Kevin Regan
Rowan University

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Background

- Sleep deprivation profoundly impacts various physiological and psychological functions.
 - Notably influencing pain perception.
- This complex relationship is mediated through alterations in sleep parameters such as Total Sleep Time (TST), Sleep Efficiency (SE), Sleep Onset Latency (SOL), and Wake After Sleep Onset (WASO), which directly affect both sleep quality and the body's pain response mechanisms.
- Research Objectives:**
 - Determine neurobiological pathways affected by sleep deprivation that exacerbate neuropathic pain, and how these pathways can be targeted to mitigate pain.
 - Determine the impact of sleep deprivation on pain sensitivity in individuals with chronic pain.
 - Determine if dietary interventions that enhance sleep quality also effectively modulate pain perception.

Methods

Search Strategy:

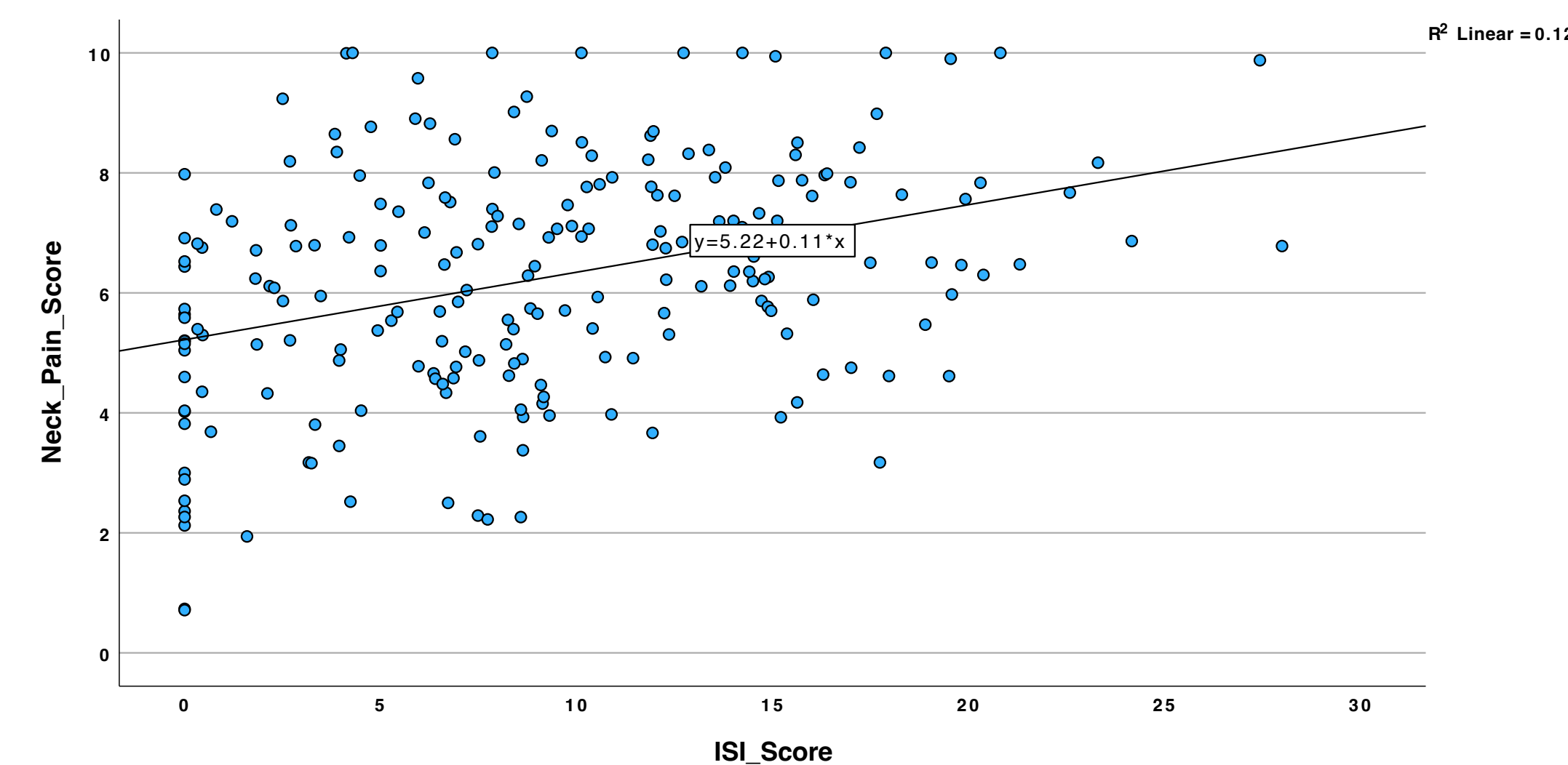
Database	Search Date	Keyword String	# Results
PubMed	3/25/24	"Insomnia" AND "Musculoskeletal pain"	44
		"Insomnia" AND "MSK pain"	9
PubMed	4/2/24	"Sleep" AND "Musculoskeletal pain"	357
		"Insomnia" AND "MSK pain"	7
		"Sleep" AND "Pain" AND "Perception" AND "Healthy"	80

Inclusion Criteria:

- Directly addressed research questions
- Adults
- Peer-reviewed
- Published since 2010
- Available in English
- Systematic reviews, meta-analyses, clinical trials, longitudinal studies, and cohort analyses

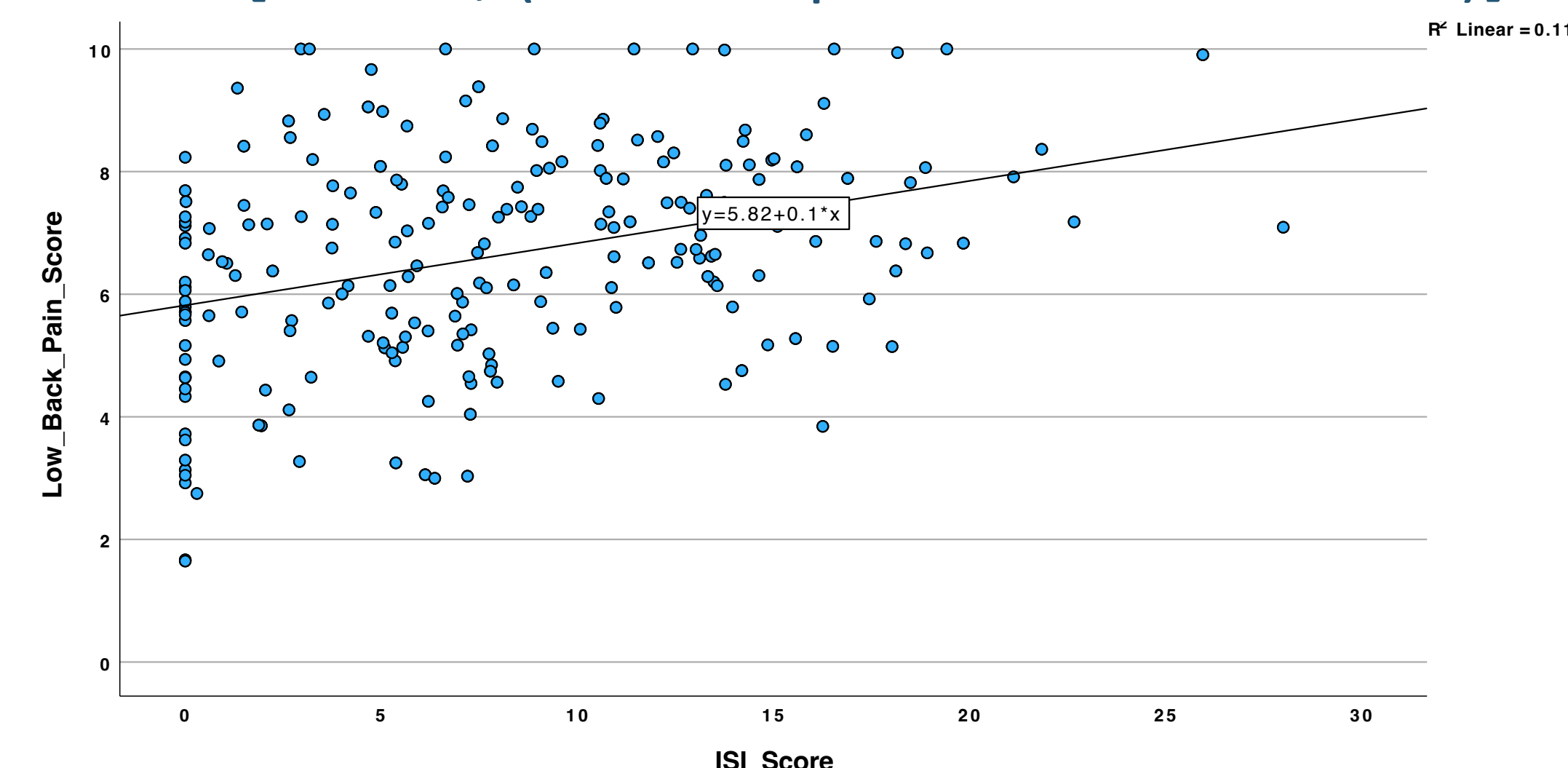
Results

Figure 1. Scatter Plot of Insomnia Severity Index (ISI) Score and Chronic Neck Pain (CNP) Score [N=218, (data adapted from Kim et al.⁴)]



- With an R^2 of 0.129, there is a modest relationship between CNP and ISI, suggesting that interventions targeting insomnia may benefit pain management outcomes in CNP patients.

Figure 2. Scatter Plot of Insomnia Severity Index (ISI) Score and Chronic Low Back Pain (CLBP) Score [N=481, (data adapted from Kim et al.⁵)]



Conclusion

- Our research demonstrates that disrupted sleep, particularly the reduction in deep sleep stages like N3 and REM, correlates with heightened pain sensitivity.
 - Suggests that adequate restorative sleep plays a crucial role in modulating pain.
- Studies have shown that sleep deprivation decreases the effectiveness of natural analgesics and exacerbate the inflammatory response.
 - In the context of neuropathic pain, it persists due to nervous system damage, disrupting neurobiological mediators such as opioids, serotonin, and inflammation pathways, which are also all influenced by sleep quality.

Discussion

- Sleep deprivation not only impacts pain perception but also influences various physiological and psychological functions, suggesting a multidimensional approach to pain management in these patients.
- Alterations in sleep parameters such as TST, SE, SOL, and WASO directly affect both sleep quality and the body's pain response mechanisms.
- Our findings support previous research indicating that adequate restorative sleep plays a crucial role in modulating pain sensitivity, further emphasizing the importance of addressing sleep disturbances in chronic pain populations.
- Our research also highlights the bidirectional relationship between sleep deprivation and pain, suggesting that the proper management of both are essential for optimal performance and well-being
 - Especially in athletes who are faced with the problem of reduced sleep quality due to demands of training, traveling, and stress.

Future Direction

- Explore nutritional interventions that may improve sleep.
 - Research suggests possibly increased carbohydrate intake or specific nutrients like tryptophan, melatonin, or valerian.
- Evaluate the efficacy of diet, exercise, or behavioral interventions aimed at enhancing sleep quality in modulating pain perception, potentially offering novel approaches to pain management strategies.
- Investigate manual therapeutic therapies to mitigate pain in chronic pain populations affected by sleep deprivation.

References

