ePain: An Electronic Pain Diary

Introduction

ePain is a simple and easy-to-use computer program that automates the collection of daily pain ratings for individuals who experience chronic pain. ePain is meant to replace traditional paper-based pain diaries. This program is freeware and can be downloaded at http://www.scarthmckillop.ca.

The program is gender-specific and offers one version for women and one version for men. The program has been designed to be small in size and requires a Windows operating system and a PDF viewer.

Diary Page

The main screen of the program contains the diary (Figure 1). This screen asks the user to (1) rate his or her current pain, mood, and level of activity, (2) indicate on the body image those areas that are painful today, and (3) describe how his or her day was today. The program assumes that one diary entry will be provided for each day and usually at the end of the day. However, nothing in the program stops the user from entering as many diary entries as he or she wishes on any given day.
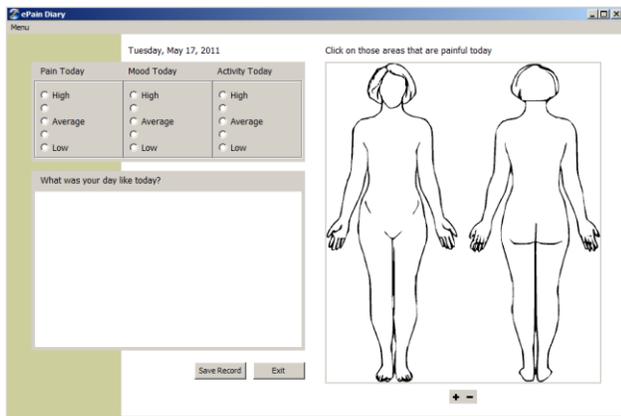

Figure 1. Diary Screen

Each diary entry is called a record. When an entry for the day has been completed, clicking on the

Save Record button will place the entry in the program's database.

Identifying Body Areas with Pain

The program allows the user to indicate areas of pain by drawing on the body diagram. To highlight body areas that are painful, the user clicks his or her mouse over the appropriate body area. This creates a red circle on the selected body area. Right clicking the mouse erases the red circle.
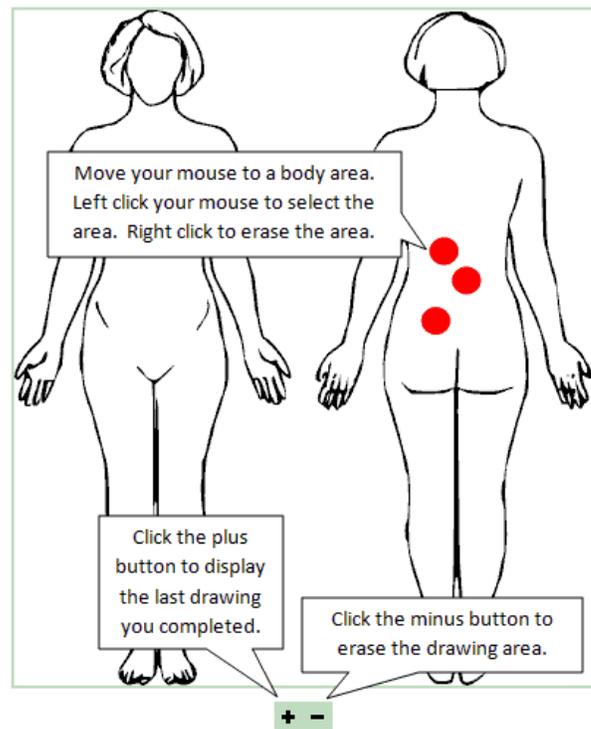

Figure 2. Body Diagram

As shown in Figure 2, at the bottom of the drawing area there are two control buttons. The *plus* (+) button displays that last pain drawing that had been completed by the user. If areas of pain are relatively stable and do not change considerably from day to day, using this button saves time and reduces the need for the user to recreate the same pain drawing each day. The *minus* (-) button clears the

drawing area and allows the user to start a new pain drawing.

The Pain Drawing Self-Corrects

When a diary record is saved, the program automatically erases any red dots that occur outside of the body image and redraws the body outline. Therefore, the user does not need to be overly careful when creating a pain drawing. For example, in the picture below, the image to the left represents a pain drawing before it is saved and the image to the right is corrected drawing after it has been saved.

Figure 3. Corrected Pain Drawing

Prior Records Page

The program allows you to review all saved prior diary entries. To review diary entries pull down the *Menu* on the Diary Page and select *Review Prior Records*.

Figure 4. Selecting Prior Records

This will show the Prior Records page (see Figure 5). Use the navigation buttons at the bottom of the body diagram to move through all of your prior diary records. If you wish, you can delete any record by clicking the *Delete* button.
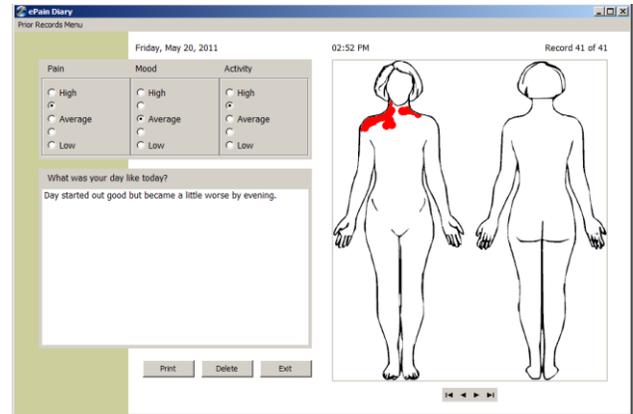

Figure 5. Prior Records Page

The program allows you to print any diary entry by clicking the *Print* button. When you click the *Print* button, the program creates a PDF and then attempts to show that file in your PDF reader. You can then print or save that file. An example of a printed diary record is shown below.
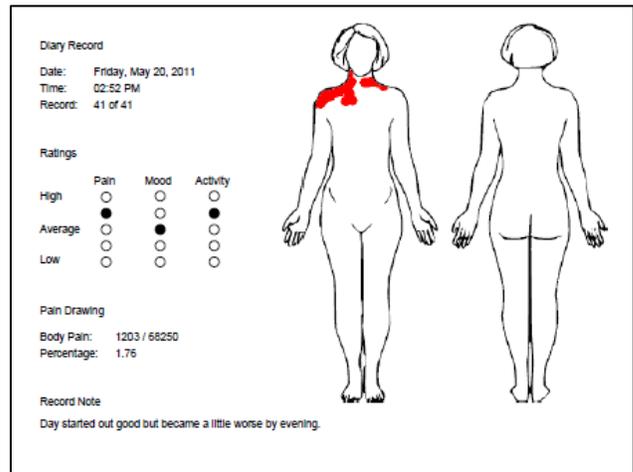

Figure 6. Printed Diary Record

Displaying Multiple Records

To view more than one diary record, select *Record Summary* from the *Menu*. This allows the user to view a range of up to 100 records at one time. The summary displays an accumulated pain drawing as well as charts of pain, mood, and activity ratings. In the summary pain drawing, red shading is used to depict how frequently specific body areas were

selected. The brighter the area, the more frequent that area was selected across the selected range of diary records. For example, the image below depicts how summary information for a range of records would appear in the program. Once displayed, you can print this information by clicking the *Print* button.
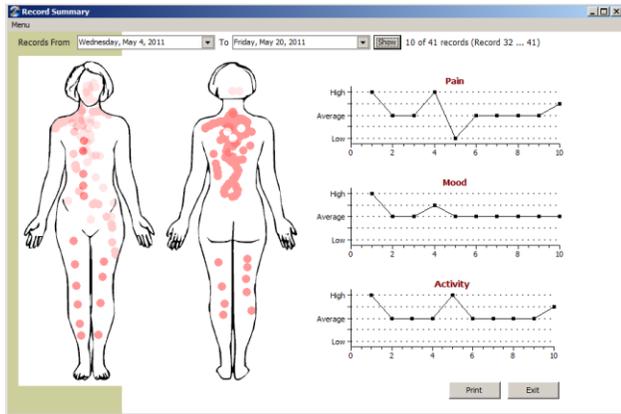

Figure 7. Record Summary Page

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www.cure-back-pain.org

Male Body Image © 2011
Ronald B. Margolis Ph.D.
St. Louis Behavioral Medicine Institute
1129 Macklind Avenue
St. Louis MO 63110

Contact

Jeffrey M. McKillop PhD
1095 The Parkway
London ON N6A 2W8
jeff.mckillop@scarthmckillop.ca

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