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HEALTH BELIEFS, SOMATISING TENDENCY, MENTAL HEALTH AND RECENT HISTORY OF PAIN AS PREDICTORS OF THE INCIDENCE AND PERSISTENCE OF LOW BACK PAIN IN SPANISH WORKERS

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Objectives To assess whether health beliefs, somatising tendency, mental health and history of LBP are important predictors of incidence and persistence of low back pain (LBP).

Methods As part of the CUPID study, computer assisted personal interviews were performed in 1105 Spanish nurses and office workers, aged 20–59 years. At baseline, questions were asked about LBP in the past month and past year. Health beliefs, somatising tendency and mental health were assessed using questions from previously validated questionnaires. After 1 year we asked again about LBP in the past month. Associations with incidence and persistence of LBP were explored using logistic regression modeling.

Results 971 participants (87.9%) completed follow-up. Among 579 with no LBP in the past month at baseline, 22.8% reported LBP at follow-up. Among the 392 who had LBP at baseline, 59.4% reported persistence of LBP at follow-up. Risk of developing new LBP after 1 year was elevated in those with high somatising tendency (OR=2.3; 95% CI 1.3 to 4.0) and worse mental health (OR=1.7; 95% CI 1.1 to 2.9). Persistence of LBP was more common among those who thought at baseline that LBP would still be a problem in 12 months, and in those who thought that LBP in general was work-related. History of LBP for > 1 month in the past year was the strongest predictor of both incidence and persistence of LBP.

Conclusions Health beliefs, somatising tendency, mental health and history of LBP should be considered as predictors when assessing the prognosis of patients with LBP.