

Pain and itch highly prevalent months after herpes zoster

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(HealthDay)—For patients with herpes zoster (HZ), pain and itch are

prevalent and pain is associated with quality of life and increased costs, according to a study published online Sept. 9 in *Pain Practice*.

Albert J.M. van Wijck, M.D., Ph.D., and Yannick R. Aerssens, M.D., from University Medical Center Utrecht in the Netherlands, measured the presence and severity of [pain](#) and [itch](#) and impact on quality of life among 661 patients (over age 50 years) with HZ. Patient data were obtained from a web-based questionnaire.

The researchers found that 94 percent of patients reported any pain, and 74.3 and 26 percent reported significant and severe pain, respectively. A total of 18.8 percent of patients suffered from postherpetic neuralgia after three months. At inclusion, 70.8, 39.2, and 7.3 percent of patients had any itch, significant itch, and severe itch, respectively. Pain occurrence increased costs and affected quality of life, reducing Euroqol-5D scores by an average of 18 percent; itch had little impact on quality of life.

"Pain and itch are highly prevalent months after HZ," the authors write. "Pain caused by HZ has a large impact on quality of life, burden of illness, impact on daily life, and [health care costs](#) for these [patients](#). The impact of itch on quality of life is relatively small."

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