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**Perceived instability, pain, and psychological factors predict function and disability  
in individuals with chronic ankle instability**

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Online First

1 **Perceived instability, pain, and psychological factors predict function and disability**  
2 **in individuals with chronic ankle instability**

3  
4 **Context:** Chronic ankle instability (CAI) is associated with residual instability, pain, decreased  
5 function, and increased disablement. Injury-related fear has been associated with CAI, although  
6 its relationship to other impairments is unclear. The Fear-Avoidance Model is a theoretical  
7 framework hypothesizing a relationship between injury-related fear, chronic pain, pain  
8 catastrophizing, and disability. It has been useful in understanding fear's influence in other  
9 musculoskeletal conditions but has yet to be studied in those with CAI.

10 **Objective:** To explore relationships between instability, pain catastrophizing, injury-related fear,  
11 pain, ankle function, and global disability in individuals with CAI.

12 **Design:** Cross-Sectional Study

13 **Setting:** Anonymous online survey

14 **Patients or Other Participants:** A total of 259 people, recruited via e-mail and social media,  
15 with a history of ankle sprain completed the survey; of those, 126 participants (age=32.69±4.38,  
16 female=84.92%, highly active=73.81%) were identified to have CAI and were included in the  
17 analysis.

18 **Main Outcome Measure(s):** Demographics included gender identity, age, and physical activity  
19 level. Assessments encompassed the Identification of Functional Ankle Instability (instability),  
20 the Pain Catastrophizing Scale (pain catastrophizing), the Tampa Scale of Kinesiophobia-11  
21 (injury-related fear), a numeric pain rating scale and activity-based question (pain presence), the  
22 Quick-FAAM (ankle function), and the modified Disablement in the Physically Active Scale

23 (disability). Relationships between variables were explored through correlation and regression  
24 analyses.

25 **Results:** After controlling for instability and pain, pain catastrophizing and injury-related fear  
26 were significantly related to function and disability ratings in individuals with CAI. Together, the  
27 variables predicted 48.7% ( $P<.001$ ) variance in function and 44.2% ( $P<.001$ ) variance in  
28 disability.

29 **Conclusions:** Greater instability, pain, greater pain catastrophizing, and greater injury-related  
30 fear were predictive of decreased function and greater disability in those with CAI. This is  
31 consistent with the hypothesized relationships in the Fear-Avoidance Model, although further  
32 investigation is needed to determine causality of these factors in the development of CAI.

33 **Key Words:** ankle sprain, patient-reported outcomes, dimension-specific outcomes, health-  
34 related quality of life

35 **Abstract Word Count:** 299 (with headers)

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37 **Key Points:**

- 38 • Greater instability and pain catastrophizing, presence of pain, and greater injury-related  
39 fear were related to lower function and greater disability in physically active individuals  
40 with chronic ankle instability (CAI).
- 41 • Clinicians should begin to identify these factors in CAI patients and explore intervention  
42 strategies for reducing pain and injury-related fear as this may assist in improving  
43 function and disability.

- 44 • Investigations demonstrating the influence of cognitive-affective factors like pain  
45 catastrophizing and injury-related fear on the development of chronicity after ankle  
46 sprain are still needed.

47

Online First

48 Out of 11.8 million physician office visits annually, 23% involve a sprain or strain injury  
49 to the ankle or foot.<sup>1</sup> Disruption or stretch of the lateral ankle ligaments, most often the anterior  
50 talofibular and in more severe cases the calcaneofibular ligaments<sup>2</sup> have the highest incidence  
51 (0.93 out of 1,000 exposures) when compared to other types of ankle sprains.<sup>3</sup> Lateral ankle  
52 sprains are often regarded as benign injuries that will resolve quickly with minimal treatment.  
53 While there are patients, known as ankle sprain copers, who seem to fully recover after their  
54 ankle sprain injury, evidence suggests that 40% of individuals continue to suffer from recurrent  
55 sprains, episodes of instability, and perceived ankle instability for over one year after their initial  
56 sprain.<sup>3</sup> These characteristics comprise a condition known as chronic ankle instability (CAI).<sup>4</sup>  
57 Many other impairments have been identified within the CAI population including stability and  
58 movement pattern alterations, decreased perceived levels of ankle function, increased levels of  
59 global disability, physical activity restrictions, and post-traumatic ankle osteoarthritis.<sup>5</sup> Despite  
60 decades of research, it is still not fully understood which specific factor, or combination of  
61 factors, lead some patients down this continuum of disability.

62 Chronic musculoskeletal conditions are typically characterized by both disability and  
63 pain,<sup>1</sup> however, pain has not been a major focus in the CAI literature despite evidence of  
64 persisting pain after ankle sprains beyond the typical acute stage.<sup>6</sup> A recent retrospective analysis  
65 revealed 60% of CAI participants in previous research studies reported pain during different  
66 levels of activity.<sup>7</sup> The role of pain in CAI is still unknown but it has shown associations with  
67 perceived instability<sup>7</sup> and function<sup>8</sup> in recent reports. Despite this, the intensity of recurrent pain  
68 in this population was reported to be a mild intensity,<sup>9</sup> which may not alone contribute to  
69 changes in function. It is well-documented that pain is inextricably linked to emotional and  
70 cognitive functions.<sup>10</sup> Injury-related fear is a cognitive-affective factor that has been identified in

71 individuals who develop CAI.<sup>11</sup> Injury-related fear has shown associations to negative outcomes  
72 after injury regarding physical impairments, recovery, and function in other musculoskeletal  
73 conditions through use of the fear-avoidance model (FAM).<sup>12-14</sup>

74 The FAM is a cognitive-behavioral model that postulates that exaggerated negative  
75 beliefs about pain, known as pain catastrophizing, can lead patients into a cycle of fear and  
76 activity avoidance.<sup>15</sup> These changes can lead to disuse which can often create new pathological  
77 pain pathways beyond the healing of the originally injured tissue, that continues these individuals  
78 down the path toward chronic pain and disability. On the other side of the model, individuals  
79 who do not prioritize pain-related thoughts after injury are hypothesized to be able to then  
80 confront their pain and injury, which leads them towards full recovery and function.<sup>15</sup> The most  
81 recent model for CAI proposes that after an ankle sprain injury an individual will fall along a  
82 spectrum of outcomes ranging from copers (fully recovered) to CAI (chronic disability)<sup>5</sup> which  
83 mirrors the hypothesized outcomes in FAM. As such, the FAM and its components may also  
84 serve as a theoretical model for understanding the development of CAI in some individuals post-  
85 ankle sprain.

86 Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine whether the FAM and its  
87 components may be applicable to patients with CAI by examining relationships between pain  
88 catastrophizing, injury-related fear, pain, ankle function and global disability. This was tested  
89 through three specific aims. Our first aim was to examine the relationship between the two  
90 cognitive-affective model components – pain catastrophizing and injury-related fear. Pain  
91 catastrophizing is thought to contribute to the development of injury-related fear, but it is also  
92 possible that those who are fearful of re-injury may adopt pain catastrophizing cognitions that  
93 increase focus on the feared stimuli of pain. Thus, our first hypothesis was that greater pain

94 catastrophizing beliefs would be related to greater levels of reported injury-related fear. Our  
95 second aim was to determine the influence of pain presence on reported function and disability.  
96 We hypothesized that the presence of pain would explain additional variance beyond reported  
97 instability in both ankle function and global disability outcomes. Our third aim was to determine  
98 the unique role of the cognitive-affective model components in predicting function and  
99 disability. We hypothesized that when controlling for instability and pain, both pain  
100 catastrophizing and injury-related fear would uniquely explain additional variance in both  
101 function and disability.

## 102 **Methods**

103 This study used a cross-sectional, online survey design and was approved as exempt  
104 research by the [REDACTED] Health Sciences Human Subjects Review Committee  
105 in December 2020. Recruitment for potential participants occurred over a 4-week period and was  
106 done via email in a university setting, and through shareable social media posts (Facebook and  
107 Twitter) to broaden our geographical and demographic reach. Participants were required to be  
108 between the ages of 18 and 40 years old. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for potential CAI  
109 participants followed the guidelines set forth by the International Ankle Consortium<sup>4</sup> and  
110 questions pertaining to these criteria were included in the survey to determine eligibility.

111 Participants were classified as having CAI if they reported at least one significant ankle  
112 sprain which was sustained at least 12 months prior to the survey and also reported residual  
113 symptoms including recurrent ankle sprains, and/or 2 or more giving away episodes in the  
114 previous 6 months, and/or perceived instability classified as a score  $\geq 11$  on the Identification of  
115 Functional Ankle Instability (IdFAI).<sup>4</sup> Individuals were excluded if they had sustained an acute

116 lower extremity injury within the past three months, or had a history of lower extremity fracture  
117 or surgery.

118 We used Qualtrics (Provo, Utah) to create the anonymous survey which consisted of 37  
119 total questions. This included the informed consent, a demographic section, general inclusion  
120 and exclusion criteria, specific questions and tools to determine the classification of CAI, and the  
121 patient-related outcome assessments for collecting pain catastrophizing, injury-related fear, pain,  
122 ankle function, and global disability outcomes. As each of the patient-related outcome  
123 assessments have established validity and reliability levels, no additional validation was  
124 completed for our survey. Additionally, the patient-related outcome assessments were organized  
125 into matrix-type questions to lower the overall total number of questions in the survey.

### 126 ***Pain Catastrophizing***

127 The Pain Catastrophizing Scale (PCS) was used to assess pain catastrophizing beliefs.<sup>16</sup> It  
128 was chosen because it has been used in other ligament injury populations<sup>13</sup> and has also  
129 demonstrated strong internal consistency ( $\alpha=0.93$ ), good test-retest reliability (ICC=0.75),  
130 validity,<sup>16,17</sup> and has demonstrated factor stability across sexes and in both injured and non-  
131 injured, pain-free populations.<sup>18</sup> The PCS is a 13-item scale assessing the frequency of negative  
132 pain-related beliefs and ranges from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*always*). Total scores are calculated  
133 (ranging from 0-52), along with three subscale scores assessing magnification, rumination, and  
134 helplessness, with higher scores indicating higher levels of pain catastrophizing.

### 135 ***Injury-Related Fear***

136 The Tampa Scale of Kinesiophobia-11 (TSK-11) was used to assess fear of movement  
137 and re-injury.<sup>19</sup> It has demonstrated good internal consistency ( $\alpha=0.79$ ), test-retest reliability  
138 (ICC=0.81), and validity when compared to the original 17 item scale,<sup>19</sup> and has demonstrated

139 differences between individuals with and without CAI.<sup>20</sup> It is an 11-item scale ranging from 1  
140 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*) yielding total scores ranging from 11-44, with higher  
141 scores indicating higher levels of fear related to movement and re-injury.

## 142 ***Pain***

143 Pain was used as a binary outcome (present or not present) for the purpose of this study  
144 and was determined using the answer on two survey questions. The first question is from the  
145 Cumberland Ankle Instability Instrument (CAIT) and states, “I have ankle pain” and has six  
146 potential answers (walking on level surfaces, walking on uneven surfaces, running on level  
147 surfaces, running on uneven surfaces, during sport, or never). Participants who reported pain  
148 during any level of physical activity were considered to have pain.<sup>7</sup> Because this question  
149 describes conditional pain activities, the use of a numerical rating scale for pain was also used  
150 secondarily to determine pain presence. Participants were also asked to rate their highest level of  
151 ankle pain they have experienced within the past week on a scale from 0 (*none*) to 10 (*worst pain*  
152 *imaginable*). Any participant who responded with reported pain > 0 was considered to have pain.

## 153 ***Ankle Function***

154 The Quick-FAAM is a regional scale designed to determine functional limitations in  
155 those with foot and ankle conditions.<sup>21</sup> It is a shortened version of the Foot and Ankle Ability  
156 Measure (FAAM) and retained five items from the FAAM-Activities of Daily Living and seven  
157 items from the FAAM-Sport subscales. It is a 12-item scale ranging from 4 (*no difficulty at all*)  
158 to 0 (*unable to do*). Scores are totaled and transformed into percentages, with 100% being  
159 representative of no functional loss. It has demonstrated strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ),<sup>21</sup>  
160 and acceptable test-retest reliability,<sup>22</sup> and recently was found to be able to distinguish between  
161 individuals with CAI and copers, with CAI patients demonstrating lower scores.<sup>23</sup>

162 ***Global Disability***

163 The modified Disablement in the Physically Active Scale (mDPA) is a global scale  
164 designed for individuals who are physically active.<sup>24</sup> The mDPA has demonstrated high test-  
165 retest reliability (ICC=0.943) and internal consistency ( $\alpha=0.890-0.908$ ).<sup>24</sup> The mDPA is 16 items  
166 ranging from 0 (*no problem*) to 4 (*severe*) and addresses both physical and mental factors. Total  
167 scores range from 0-64, with higher scores being indicative of increased disablement. The  
168 mDPA has shown to detect differences in those with and without CAI, with individuals with CAI  
169 reporting higher disablement.<sup>20</sup>

170 ***Statistical Analyses***

171 Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 27 (IBM  
172 Corporation, Armonk, NY) on all participants who were classified as CAI. Individuals were  
173 excluded if the survey was not completed in its entirety or if they did not meet the full inclusion  
174 and exclusion criteria. Demographic variables are summarized as either mean (standard  
175 deviation) or as n (%) overall. To test the first hypothesis, Pearson-product moment correlations  
176 were used to evaluate the relationships between pain catastrophizing (PCS) and injury-related  
177 fear (TSK-11), and correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) were interpreted as (negligible < 0.3, low = 0.3-  
178 0.49, moderate = 0.5-0.69, high = 0.7-0.89, very high = 0.9-1.0).<sup>25</sup>

179 To test our second hypotheses, two hierarchical linear regression models were used to  
180 determine the influence of pain presence on function and disability. The Quick-FAAM and  
181 mDPA served as the outcome variable in their respective models. For both models, the IdFAI  
182 score was used as a control variable and therefore entered in the first block. Pain was then  
183 entered as a two-level predictor (0=no pain; 1=pain) into the second block to determine its  
184 additional utility in predicting function and disability.

185 To test our final hypotheses, two hierarchical linear regression models were used to  
186 determine the influence of the cognitive-affective outcomes on function and disability. Again,  
187 the Quick-FAAM and mDPA served as the outcome variable in their respective models. For  
188 these analyses, both IdFAI and pain were used as control variables and entered in block one. PCS  
189 and TSK-11 were then simultaneously entered into the second block to determine their additional  
190 utility in predicting function and disability.

191 The data were assessed for bias by identifying any cases that may be outliers or  
192 influential, and although in all models, a few cases were found to have residuals  $>\pm 2$  standard  
193 deviations and one case in the mDPA model was found to have residuals  $>\pm 3$  standard  
194 deviations, all cases proved not be influential (Cooks distance  $< 1$ ) to their models. Linearity and  
195 additivity were assessed by plotting the predictors and outcome to ensure this assumption was  
196 satisfied. Effects due to multicollinearity were limited by ensuring the Pearson's correlation  
197 coefficients between predictor variables in the final model were less than 0.9, inspecting variance  
198 inflation factors and tolerances, and examining the variance distribution on the eigenvalues in the  
199 collinearity diagnostics table. The assumption of homoscedasticity was verified by inspection of  
200 the regression of standardized residual versus regression of standardized predicted value plot.  
201 Durbin-Watson testing yielded no problem with the assumption of independent errors, and  
202 although normality of errors testing indicated a slight skew in the data, we assumed normality  
203 based on the central limit theorem ( $> 30$  participants) and used bootstrapping to re-estimate the  
204 robustness of the significance testing of the model parameters, and to obtain 95% bias corrected  
205 (BCa) confidence intervals using 1,000 iterations. All assumptions were tested with strategies  
206 presented by Field.<sup>26</sup> Overall performance of the final model was evaluated using  $R^2$  and  
207 significance was set to *a priori* at  $p < 0.05$ .

## 208 Results

209 Due to the nature of our recruitment strategy, we were unable to determine the number of  
210 potential participants that our survey could have reached, however, of those that accessed the  
211 survey ( $n = 314$ ), 259 completed and submitted their answers, for a completion rate of 82.5%. Of  
212 those who completed the survey, 114 did not meet the basic inclusion and exclusion criteria (8  
213 due to age, 56 due to history of surgery, 36 due to history of fracture, 13 due to recent acute  
214 injury, and 1 reporting no history of a significant ankle sprain). An additional 19 did not meet  
215 our CAI criteria, which left a total of 126 CAI participant responses that were included in our  
216 analysis. Demographic data and mean outcome measure scores for participants are presented in  
217 Table 1.

218 We found a significant, low, positive relationship between PCS and TSK-11 scores ( $r$   
219  $=0.493$ , 95% BCa CI  $[0.357, 0.606]$ ,  $P < .001$ ), indicating that as reported levels of pain  
220 catastrophizing increased so did reported levels of injury-related fear.

221 The model with IdFAI entered as a single predictor significantly explained 23.4% of the  
222 variance in Quick-FAAM scores ( $R^2 = .234$ ,  $P < .001$ ), and the addition of pain significantly  
223 improved the Quick-FAAM model by accounting for an additional 8.9% of the variance ( $F\Delta =$   
224  $16.099$  (1, 123)  $P < .001$ ). For the final model, both IdFAI and pain were found to be  
225 significantly negatively related to Quick-FAAM ( $R^2 = .322$ ,  $P < .001$ ) and each predictor  
226 demonstrated unique predictive utility (Table 2).

227 The model with IdFAI entered as a single predictor significantly explained 21.4% of the  
228 variance in mDPA scores ( $R^2 = .214$ ,  $P < .001$ ), and again, the addition of pain significantly  
229 improved the mDPA model by accounting for an additional 6.6% of the variance ( $F\Delta = 11.198$   
230 (1, 123)  $P = .001$ ). For the final model, both IdFAI and pain were found to be significantly

231 positively related to mDPA ( $R^2 = .280, P < .001$ ), and each predictor demonstrated unique  
232 predictive utility (Table 3).

233 As noted in the previous Quick-FAAM analysis, both IdFAI and pain presence were  
234 found to be significant predictors of Quick-FAAM scores, accounting for 32.2% of the variance.  
235 The addition of the cognitive-affective outcomes (PCS and TSK) to the model significantly  
236 improved the Quick-FAAM model by accounting for an additional 16.5% of the variance ( $F\Delta =$   
237  $19.434 (2, 121) P < .001$ ). For the final model, all predictors were significantly negatively related  
238 to Quick-FAAM ( $R^2 = .487, P < .001$ ), and each predictor demonstrated unique predictive utility  
239 (Table 4).

240 Similarly, in the previous mDPA analysis, both IdFAI and pain presence were found to  
241 be significant predictors of mDPA scores, accounting for 28.0% of the variance. The addition of  
242 the cognitive-affective outcomes (PCS and TSK-11) to the model significantly improved the  
243 mDPA model by accounting for an additional 16.2% of the variance ( $F\Delta = 17.578 (2, 121) P <$   
244  $.001$ ). For the final model, all entered predictors were significantly positively related to mDPA  
245 ( $R^2 = .442, P < .001$ ), and each predictor demonstrated unique predictive utility (Table 5).

## 246 Discussion

247 The purpose of our study was to apply the FAM to the CAI population by investigating  
248 specific relationships between some of the model components. We were first interested in  
249 investigating whether a relationship existed between pain catastrophizing and injury-related fear  
250 variables as no literature has investigated pain catastrophizing in the CAI population thus far.  
251 Our hypothesis was supported in that higher levels of pain catastrophizing were significantly  
252 related to higher levels of injury-related fear. This relationship is hypothesized to exist because  
253 individuals who catastrophize pain and injury appraise pain as highly threatening. This increase

254 in the value given to the threat of pain is therefore believed to lead someone to develop fear  
255 regarding movements that are associated with pain and injury.<sup>15</sup> Although our study cannot infer  
256 the direction of this relationship, our results demonstrate that they are significantly related  
257 constructs. There is some debate in the literature on the uniqueness of these inter-related  
258 variables,<sup>18</sup> however, we found the strength of this relationship was just under moderate. So,  
259 although the constructs were found to be related, our results indicate they are unique and  
260 independent constructs and could both be used in further analyses. Others studying these  
261 variables have produced similar findings to ours.<sup>13,18</sup> Further, as injury-related fear is an  
262 established factor related to CAI,<sup>11</sup> this relationship does suggest that pain catastrophizing may  
263 be another cognitive-affective variable warranting further investigation in the ankle sprain  
264 population.

265 It is well-established that CAI can result in individuals reporting deficits in ankle function  
266 and greater levels of global disability. The FAM postulates that pain, pain catastrophizing, and  
267 injury-related fear would lead an individual to avoidant behavior which then sends them down  
268 the road of disability. Therefore, our remaining hypotheses had specific interest in how pain,  
269 pain catastrophizing, and injury-related fear related to reported ankle function and disability. Our  
270 second aim was to determine the predictive utility of symptom-related factors that have been  
271 established in the CAI population on function and disability with a special interest in determining  
272 the additional utility of pain presence on these outcomes as the role of persistent pain in the CAI  
273 population has been somewhat overlooked. Our results indicate that greater levels of perceived  
274 instability were associated with lesser reported ankle function and greater reported disability  
275 within our CAI participants. Perceived instability significantly predicted 23.4% of variance in  
276 reported ankle function and 21.4% of variance in reported disability. Perceived instability is one

277 of the characterizing symptoms of CAI<sup>4</sup> so it is not surprising that this variable would serve as an  
278 important predictor. Our hypothesis was further supported in that the models significantly  
279 improved when adding pain presence as an additional predictor which accounted for an increased  
280 8.9% and 6.6% of the variance in reported ankle function and disability, respectively. This  
281 finding is consistent with a recent cross-sectional study that found relationships exist between  
282 reported pain and function in their CAI sample<sup>8</sup> and suggests that beyond perceived instability,  
283 individuals who reported pain during activities specified by the CAIT or reported pain within the  
284 past week, reported lower levels of ankle function and greater disability. Perceived instability  
285 and pain have demonstrated a relationship in a recent investigation,<sup>7</sup> but despite this, we found  
286 both variables to be unique predictors of function and disability and contribute similar weight to  
287 the model.

288 Our final models, including all four variables, explained 48.7% of the total variance in  
289 reported ankle function and 44.2% of the total variance in reported disability. Each predictor was  
290 found to significantly add to the model and reveals that greater perceived instability, pain  
291 presence, greater pain catastrophizing, and greater injury-related fear were related to lesser  
292 reported ankle function and greater reported disability. Our hypothesis was supported in that the  
293 models significantly improved when pain catastrophizing and injury-related fear were added as  
294 predictors, when controlling for both instability and pain. Together, they accounted for an  
295 additional 16.5% and 16.2% of the variance in reported ankle function and disability,  
296 respectively, which highlights their importance to the models. The use of the FAM framework  
297 has garnered support across multiple musculoskeletal conditions,<sup>27,28</sup> including those with foot  
298 and/or ankle pain,<sup>29</sup> and overall, our results demonstrate relationships that are similar to the  
299 theoretical framework presented in the FAM, suggesting it may prove useful for continued study

300 of these variables within ankle sprain populations. Many other theoretical models and  
301 frameworks have already been applied to the ankle sprain population. Interestingly, we believe  
302 our findings both support and add important insight in describing the relationships that exist  
303 between several of the sensory-perceptual alterations (pain, kinesiophobia, perceived instability,  
304 perceived ankle function, and perceived disability) proposed in the most updated model for  
305 CAI,<sup>5</sup> while also providing support to the perceptual-interdependence framework.<sup>30</sup> The  
306 perceptual-interdependence framework describes a nested relationship of perceptual alterations  
307 after ankle sprain that span from the cellular (pain and inflammation) to societal level (activity  
308 participation).<sup>30</sup> Like the FAM, both theoretical proposals describe the likely importance of the  
309 relationship between the sensory-perceptual alterations and movement and activity behavior  
310 changes associated with CAI. Our findings suggest pain, high levels of perceived instability, and  
311 injury-related fear reduces one's perceived level of ankle function during activity which could  
312 likely promote activity avoidance behaviors. Overtime, these avoidant behaviors may lead to  
313 neural adaptations that further promote avoidance and lead to movement-behavior impairments  
314 described in the CAI population, such as poor balance and movement pattern alterations, as well  
315 as lower levels of physical activity. Overall, continued pursuit of understanding the role of  
316 persistent pain and cognitive-affective factors, such as pain catastrophizing and injury-related  
317 fear, on the development and continuance of CAI and its associated impairments is warranted.  
318 Additionally, investigating intervention strategies that mitigate persistent pain and lower injury-  
319 related fear would likely assist in improving function and disability.

320 Pain is often lumped in as a solely physical symptom; however, it is well-established that  
321 pain – specifically persisting or recurring pain - is a multidimensional experience influenced by  
322 many factors.<sup>31</sup> So although interventions specific to pain in the ankle sprain populations are

323 warranted, our results also support a multidimensional approach to rehabilitation.  
324 Psychologically informed intervention strategies may assist in the efficacy of reducing pain by  
325 targeting the interrelated cognitive-affective factors such as injury-related fear. Common  
326 psychological frameworks incorporated into rehabilitation protocols include education, imagery,  
327 self-talk or reframing, graded exposure, social support strategies, goal setting, and relaxation.<sup>12</sup>  
328 More work is needed to investigate the application of psychologically informed practice in sport  
329 injury and specifically ankle sprain populations; however, the literature is promising for the  
330 benefits that it can have in individuals following injury.<sup>32,33</sup>

### 331 *Limitations*

332 This study is not without limitations which should be considered when interpreting our  
333 results. The biggest limitation is that due to the cross-sectional design, we cannot infer causality.  
334 Further, all our participants were individuals with CAI which limits our ability to determine the  
335 predictive utility of these variables in the development of the condition. Future research could  
336 perform prospective analyses measuring these variables overtime and determine their use in  
337 predicting CAI and its associated impairments.

338 Another potential limitation to note is the relatively low scores reported on the PCS  
339 instrument by our participants. To our knowledge we are the first to report PCS scores in highly  
340 active individuals with CAI, and although our mean results are similar to recent findings in  
341 athletes, these low scores may be driving the relationship between it and the other variables  
342 within our study. As it is still unclear what threshold values are clinically meaningful to athletic  
343 populations and to those who develop CAI, future research investigating clinically meaningful  
344 cut-off scores may be relevant.

345 Another limitation of our study is that there was still approximately 50% of the variance  
346 that was not explained by our variables. Due to institutional COVID-19 research restrictions that  
347 prohibited in-person data collection, only patient-reported outcomes were used and limited the  
348 availability of clinician-rated measures. For example, balance performance is established in the  
349 CAI literature as an important variable related to reported function and disability, and likely  
350 another variable that could help to inform our models. This and other established clinician-rated  
351 variables may be considered in future investigations.

352 Lastly, we recognize there are inherent limitations when using self-report outcomes  
353 measures that can include memory and recall bias and can play a role in skewing the data  
354 collected and used within our models. Despite the limitations, we do believe that our study lends  
355 support for the FAM model being an important consideration to the CAI population.

## 356 **Conclusions**

357 Our study examined the influence of perceived instability, pain, pain catastrophizing, and  
358 injury-related fear on reported ankle function and disability in individuals with CAI. All these  
359 variables were found to serve as predictors of function and disability, which continues to support  
360 the notion that the condition is multifactorial and that these variables are important for clinicians  
361 to consider when examining or treating an individual after ankle sprain(s). Our design limitations  
362 further warrant investigations focused on the role these variables play in the transition from an  
363 acute ankle sprain to CAI, and how these variables may relate to other known impairments  
364 within these populations.

365

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**Table 1. Participant demographics and patient-reported outcome data**

Demographic or Outcome	n (%) or mean (SD)
Gender Identity	n = 126
Male	17 (13.49%)
Female	107 (84.92%)
Other*	1 (0.79%)
Prefer not to specify	1 (0.79%)
Age	32.69 (4.38)
Physical Activity Score**	n = 126
1	5 (3.97%)
2	11 (8.73%)
3	17 (13.49%)
4	45 (35.71%)
5	48 (38.10%)
IdFAI	17.31 (4.90)
Pain Presence	n = 126
No Pain	44 (34.92%)
Pain	82 (65.08%)
Pain Catastrophizing Scale	7.32 (7.46)
Helplessness	2.30 (2.94)
Magnification	2.16 (2.25)
Rumination	2.87 (3.12)
TSK-11	21.36 (5.53)
Quick-FAAM	83.22 (14.95)
mDPA	10.50 (10.67)
Physical	8.68 (8.87)
Mental	1.82 (2.85)

\*Participant identified as non-binary \*\*As described by Jurca et al<sup>24</sup> 1: Inactive or little activity other than usual daily activity; 2: Regular ( $\geq 5$  days/week) low level exertion  $>10$  minutes at a time; 3: Aerobic exercise, vigorous sport, or similar exertion for 20-60 minutes/week; 4: Aerobic exercise, vigorous sport, or similar exertion for 1-3 hours/week; 5: Aerobic exercise, vigorous sport, or similar exertion for over 3 hours/week

**Table 2. Perceived instability and pain as predictors of function**

Model		<i>b</i> (95% BCa CI)	SE <i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>P</i> value
1	(Constant)	108.778 (101.081, 116.909)	3.764		.001*
	IdFAI	-1.477 (-1.904, -1.044)	.223	-.484	.001*
2	(Constant)	107.066 (100.162, 114.319)	3.405		.001*
	IdFAI	-.979 (-1.450, -.527)	.233	-.321	.001*
	Pain Presence	-10.604 (-14.536, -6.257)	2.191	-.339	.001*

Confidence intervals, standard error, and significance are based on 1000 bootstrap samples \* $<0.001$

Online First

**Table 3. Perceived instability and pain as predictors of disability**

Model		<i>b</i> (95% BCa CI)	SE <i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>P</i> value
1	(Constant)	-6.876 (-12.152, -1.099)	2.932		.022
	IdFAI	1.004 (.644, 1.353)	.183	.463	.001*
2	(Constant)	-5.830 (-11.175, -2.56)	2.920		.046
	IdFAI	.700 (.316, 1.103)	.213	.322	.003
	Pain Presence	6.482 (2.929, 10.242)	1.883	.292	.002

Confidence intervals, standard error, and significance are based on 1000 bootstrap samples \* $<0.001$

Online First

**Table 4. Perceived instability, pain, and cognitive-affective variables as predictors of function**

Model		<i>b</i> (95% BCa CI)	SE <i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>P</i> value
2	(Constant)	120.620 (112.037, 129.231)	4.515		.001*
	IdFAI	-.650 (-1.104, -.216)	.230	-.213	.006
	Pain Presence	-10.045 (-13.664, -6.072)	2.023	-.322	.001*
	PCS	-.393 (-.714, -.095)	.163	-.196	.016
	TSK	-.783 (-1.182, -.375)	.210	-.290	.001*

Confidence intervals, standard error, and significance are based on 1000 bootstrap samples \* $<0.001$

Online First

**Table 5. Perceived instability, pain, and cognitive-affective variables as predictors of function**

Model		<i>b</i> (95% BCa CI)	SE <i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>P</i> value
2	Constant	-14.152 (-20.570, -7.159)	3.355		.001*
	IdFAI	.475 (.083, .890)	.206	.219	.026
	Pain Presence	6.169 (2.660, 9.247)	1.644	.278	.001*
	PCS	.346 (.098, .585)	.120	.243	.003
	TSK	.463 (.167, .743)	.147	.241	.002

Confidence intervals, standard error, and significance are based on 1000 bootstrap samples \* $<0.001$

Online First