Abstract

Background: People with low back pain (LBP) with higher levels of external locus of control have a poorer prognosis and require greater improvements from active interventions in order to consider these interventions worthwhile. Whether locus of control levels differ between participants with LBP in a patient-health provider relationship and those waiting for treatment is unclear. Objective: The aim was to investigate if differences in locus of control exist between participants with non-specific chronic LBP being treated (treatment group) and those waiting treatment (control group). Methods: 100 participants (50 per group) with low back symptoms for at least three months for the current episode of LBP and aged between 18 and 60 years were recruited. Multidimensional health locus of control questionnaire (MHLC) was used to collect their beliefs. Multiple linear regression adjusted for disability was used to compare health locus of control between both groups. Differences were described as mean differences and 95% confidence intervals. Results: Treatment group scored higher for external locus of control and lower for internal locus of control than control group. Mean differences (95% confidence intervals) were 2.7 points on possible 30-points difference (0.5 to 4.8) for external locus of control and -2.8 points (-5.4 to -0.1) for internal subscale. Conclusion: Health locus of control was found to be different between treatment and control groups. Participants being treated had higher external locus of control and lower internal locus of control than control group.

Keywords
Locus of control, low back pain, beliefs, physical therapy.