



Yiannis Koumpouros <sup>1,\*</sup> and Aggelos Georgoulas <sup>2</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Department of Public and Community Health, School of Public Health, Athens Campus, University of West Attica, 11521 Athens, Greece
- <sup>2</sup> Department of Informatics and Computer Engineering, School of Engineering, Egaleo Park Campus, University of West Attica, 12243 Egaleo, Greece
- \* Correspondence: ykoump@uniwa.gr

Abstract: Shared decision making is crucial in the pain domain. The subjective nature of pain demands solutions that can facilitate pain assessment and management. The aim of the current study is to review the current trends in both the commercial and the research domains in order to reveal the key issues and guidelines that could further help in the effective development of pain-focused apps. We searched for scientific publications and commercial apps in 22 databases and the two major app stores. Out of 3612 articles and 336 apps, 69 met the requirements for inclusion following the PRISMA guidelines. An analysis of their features (technological approach, design methodology, evaluation strategy, and others) identified critical points that have to be taken into consideration in future efforts. For example, commercial and research efforts target different types of pain, while no participatory design is followed in the majority of the cases examined. Moreover, the evaluation of the final apps remains a challenge that hinders their success. The examined domain is expected to experience a substantial increase. More research is needed towards the development of non-intrusive wearables and sensors for pain detection and assessment, along with artificial intelligence techniques and open data.

**Keywords:** mobile health (mhealth); pain; information and communication technologies; ehealth; pain management; pain assessment

## 1. Introduction

Chronic pain is a widespread, complex, and distressing issue that has a profound effect on people and society [1]. According to the European Pain Federation, more than 500 million days of missed work in Europe were caused by chronic pain; this can be translated into more than EUR 300 billion (1.5–3% of the gross domestic product) [2]. In 2019, recognizing its importance, the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) incorporated a new classification system of chronic pain [3]. Each person may feel pain differently. Thus, a significant issue of subjectivity arises. At the same time, clinicians need objective data and methodologies to support their decisions and reach a proposed therapy. In order to address the many challenges associated with pain, novel approaches are needed (i.e., assessment and treatment).

A key element of patient-centered care is patient empowerment. In a new patientcentered care paradigm, actions that include patients in their healthcare choices need to be encouraged. Shared decision making (SDM) is a collaborative mechanism that enables the clinician and patient to work together in making health decisions, exploring the alternatives, advantages, and negatives, while also recognizing the beliefs and perspectives of the patient [4]. To this end, there is a clear need for tools that support the subjective assessment and management of pain in a more quantifiable and objective way in order to improve care with a more effective approach.



Citation: Koumpouros, Y.; Georgoulas, A. Pain Management Mobile Applications: A Systematic Review of Commercial and Research Efforts. *Sensors* 2023, 23, 6965. https://doi.org/10.3390/s23156965

Academic Editor: Isabel De la Torre Díez

Received: 12 May 2023 Revised: 7 July 2023 Accepted: 2 August 2023 Published: 5 August 2023



**Copyright:** © 2023 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/ 4.0/). Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are increasingly being used in pain care to address some of the challenges mentioned previously. Several topics are addressed through the use of ICTs, such as technology-enhanced pain treatment effective-ness/efficiency, pain management, technology-enhanced assessment or diagnosis of underlying conditions causing pain, etc. The widespread adoption of mobile health (mHealth) applications presents numerous advantages to all parties involved, leading to improved outcomes [5]. Although the utilization of mobile apps for pain management and tracking has been observed for several years, the initial endeavors were relatively rudimentary [6]. Preliminary investigations have highlighted the lack of consumer and clinician engagement and participation during the development process and the variations in app quality. Nowadays, an increasing number of apps are available for tracking, assessing, and managing pain [7,8], offering a wide range of features. However, the development of these apps for the wider market rarely follows scientific guidelines.

This systematic review makes significant contributions in several areas. The major findings and contributions of the review can be summarized as follows:

- Identification and synthesis of research attempts: The review examines the current state of progress in mHealth apps for pain management and identifies, interprets, and synthesizes the state-of-the-art research efforts. This includes investigating the design and assessment approaches, as well as the usability features reported in the scientific literature.
- Overview of available solutions in the market: The review provides an extensive overview of the existing mHealth apps for pain management that are available on the market. By analyzing these solutions, the review identifies gaps and areas for improvement in the field and serves as a guide for future pain app development.
- Comparison of research and commercial efforts: The review conducts a comparative analysis of the research and commercial endeavors in the field of mHealth apps for pain management. This comparison helps to reveal the key issues and challenges encountered in both domains and provides insights and recommendations for new endeavors.

### 2. Materials and Methods

The study included mobile apps designed for both patients and physicians; the app designs were focused on pain tracking, education, evaluation, and care. The systematic literature review (SLR) process and the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were adopted [9]. Table 1 presents the defined research questions. The different phases of the research process are presented in the following pages.

## 2.1. Pain-Related Applications Reported on Scientific Databases

A search of peer-reviewed publications targeting pain-related mHealth apps was conducted over a four-month period (September 2019–January 2020). In the first stage, a collection of criteria and resources for the search terms were specified. Science Citation Index Expanded, Excerpta Medica database by Elsevier, Google Scholar, SCOPUS, Medline, and PubMed were the main sources. Other sources of data included the Directory of Open Access Journals, BMJ Journals, Wolters Kluwer—Ovid—Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Health Reference Center Academic, Expert Reviews, Wolters Kluwer-Ovid, Wiley Online Library, Social Sciences Citation Index, SpringerLink Open Access, DiVA—Academic Archive Online, SciVerse ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis Online-Journals, American Psychological Association, SpringerLink, Informa—Informa Healthcare, and references from relevant articles. As the scope of the subject is broad without a formal taxonomy, a number of appropriate key words were established to provide maximum coverage. According to PICO (patient/population, intervention, comparison, and outcomes) [10], the keywords used in the queries were as follows: (\*ache OR pain) AND (mobile OR application OR app OR smartphone OR electronic OR PDA OR "Personal Digital Assistant" OR "handheld device" OR mHealth OR ICT OR "Information and Communication Technologies" OR telemedicine OR telehealth OR tablet OR "virtual reality" OR "augmented reality"). The inclusion criteria are presented below:

- Papers after 2000 in English;
- Papers from peer-reviewed conferences/journals;
- Articles focused on mobile apps for pain management/assessment;
- Full or short versions of papers must be available (not abstracts);
- Studies involving mobile devices.

Table 1. (a) Research questions (for articles); (b) research questions (for commercial apps).

(a)		
No.	Research Question	Objective
RQ1	What are the target groups?	To classify (number, characteristics, and types) the population targeted (patients, healthcare professionals, and carers).
RQ2	What health conditions are targeted?	To describe the particular symptoms and health problems that are examined.
RQ3	What is the technological approach followed?	To report data on the various technological approaches in terms of hardware, software, sensors, artificial intelligence, etc.
RQ4	What is the chronological distribution of the publications?	To report the frequency of research on pain apps over time.
RQ5	What assessment methodologies are used?	To analyze the methodologies of evaluation (objective or subjective) of the applications.
RQ6	What methodology is followed for pain assessment?	To analyze the methodologies of pain assessment (objective or subjective).
RQ7	Which methods are used to assess user acceptance?	To examine the user friendliness, user acceptance, and human–computer interaction (HCI) methodologies.
(b)		
No.	Research Question	Objective
RQ8	What health conditions are targeted?	To classify (number, characteristics, and types) the population targeted (patients, healthcare professionals, and carers).
RQ9 RQ10	What is the targeted platform of the app? Design methodology	To provide information on the targeted platforms of the selected apps. To report end users' involvement in the design process.

The systematic review paper applied exclusion criteria to ensure that the focus was on relevant and recent English-language research published in peer-reviewed sources. Excluded were papers published before the year 2000; non-English papers; those not published in peer-reviewed conferences or journals; articles unrelated to mobile apps for pain management or assessment; papers available solely as abstracts without full or short versions; and studies not involving the use of mobile devices. These criteria guaranteed the inclusion of comprehensive and applicable research while excluding abstract-only studies and those unrelated to mobile devices.

For quality evaluation purposes, the papers under review were assigned weights according to their importance. The criteria and their weights are set out in Supplementary Materials (Table S1), with a maximum score of 7 points. The research questions reported in Table 1a were supported by an appropriate data extraction process (Supplementary Materials, Table S2). The selected papers underwent a full-text review.

#### 2.2. Commercially Available Pain-Related Applications

The data included basic details of the commercial pain apps that were available in the two major app stores. The included applications targeted patients and healthcare professionals for education, treatment, and assessment purposes related to pain. The search was conducted from December 2019 to June 2020. The main sources were the Google Play Store website [11], Vionza iTunes, the App Store search engine [12], and the myhealthapps website [13]. According to PICO, the keywords used in the queries were as follows: (Pain

OR \*ache) AND (management OR diary OR assessment OR education OR treatment OR track OR log OR record OR scale OR severity).

The inclusion criteria are presented below:

- Present in Play Store or App Store (or both);
- Details are given in description section;
- Category: Medical OR Health&Fitness OR Health&Wellness OR Education;
- Devices: Android smartphone, Tablets, iPhone, iPad.

The exclusion criteria for the systematic review were the following: apps that were not accessible in the two prominent app stores; apps lacking adequate details in the description section; apps falling outside the designated categories mentioned earlier; and apps incompatible with the specified devices. By employing these criteria, the systematic review aimed to concentrate on the apps readily available through the popular app stores that offered comprehensive information, aligned with the relevant categories, and were compatible with commonly utilized devices. This approach ensured a focused analysis on the most accessible and applicable apps within the review.

The apps under review were assigned weights according to their importance for quality evaluation purposes. Table S3 (Supplementary Materials) presents the criteria used and their weights, with a maximum score of 2 points.

The extracted features were transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then converted into a matrix format for the app review. The research questions reported in Table 1b were supported by an appropriate data extraction process (Supplementary Materials, Table S4).

The data were verified against the descriptions found on the app website or in related publications (if available). The abstracted metadata included: the app name, the developer, the developer's country of residence, the language(s), the supported platform(s), the available versions (pro, free, lite, etc.) and price, the user rating, the pain type or the related condition, the app's short description, the features, the category, the date and version of the last update, information on the design (healthcare professional—HCP—and/or patient involvement), and support information.

Sensitivity and complexity analyses were not necessary for the present investigation due to several reasons. First, the research question was straightforward and accompanied by precisely outlined criteria for including and excluding data. Second, the data exhibited a considerable level of homogeneity. Third, there were no significant uncertainties or conflicting pieces of evidence to address. Finally, we explicitly acknowledged the limitations of the study and the potential sources of bias.

#### 3. Results

## 3.1. Scientific Publications

In total, 69 articles were identified and included in the study following the PRISMA guidelines (see Figure 1). The analytical results from the scientific publications are presented in Supplementary Materials (see Tables S5 and S6 [14–81]). Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the research efforts over time.

Almost all the apps (89.3%) were gender-neutral, while from an age perspective 60.7% targeted adults, followed by 30.4% that targeted children and adolescents (see Supplementary Materials—Figures S1 and S2). The data input methods used, which refer to standard pain measurement instruments and techniques, are briefly presented in Supplementary Materials (Table S7 and Figure S3). Regarding the types of pain assessment, two major categories are reported: static (i.e., at rest), at almost 41%, and dynamic (i.e., during some sort of activity), at almost 7%. These are also coupled with standard or customized questionnaires for data collection. The vast majority of the apps reported using an active mode for data input (98.2%) and only one app reported using a hybrid data input mode (active and passive through embedded sensors in device). The results are presented in Supplementary Materials (Figures S4 and S5). The targeted condition/pain types are presented in Figure 3.

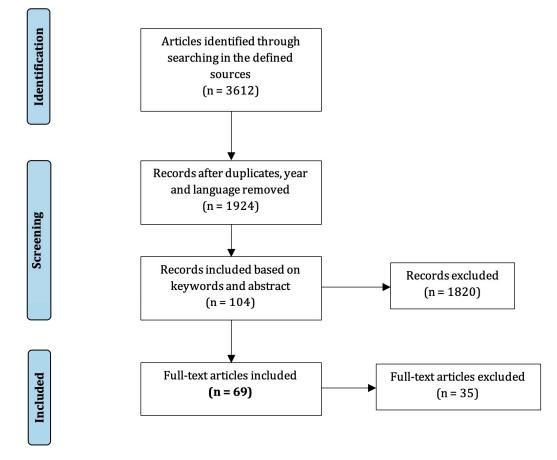
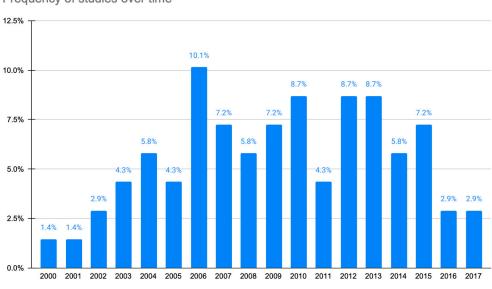


Figure 1. Flowchart of the search strategy and selection of articles.



Frequency of studies over time

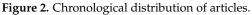


Figure 4 depicts the technological approach used to deliver the reported service. This approach refers to both the target platform (iOS, Android, etc.) and the device used (smartphone, tablet, web, mobile phone, etc.). Regarding the subjective evaluation methods used, most of the apps reported using questionnaires and interviews (28.6% each), followed by focus groups and discussion (12.5%) and observation and field notes (8.9%) (see Supplementary Materials—Figure S6).

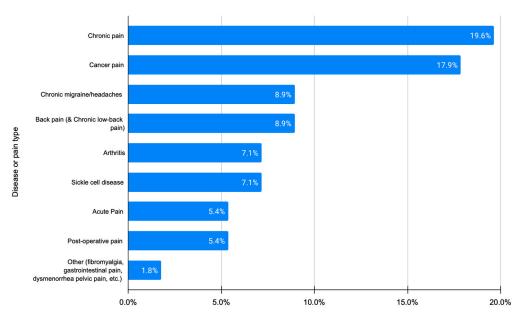


Figure 3. Target condition or pain type (for articles).

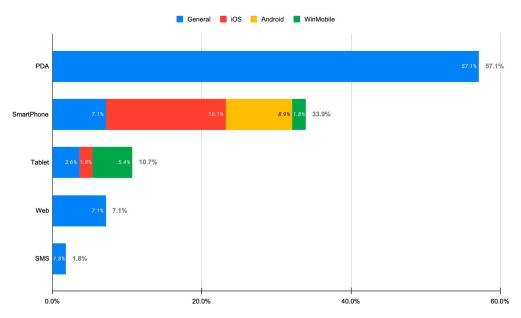


Figure 4. Technological approach followed by the identified apps (for articles).

Figure 5 presents the app design methodology and evaluation approaches.

#### 3.2. Commercial Apps

The inclusion requirements were met by a total of 336 apps (see Figure 6). The extracted data are presented in Supplementary Materials (Tables S8–S11). Almost 50% of them target only Android devices; 38% target iOS, while 11% target both platforms. General pain is the most common pain type supported (43.8%), followed by chronic migraine (26.5%) and back pain (13.1%). Regarding the design methodology, only 10.4% of the apps reported the participation of healthcare professionals, while patients' participation was reported by only 2.1% of the apps. More detailed data are presented in Supplementary Materials (Figures S7–S9).

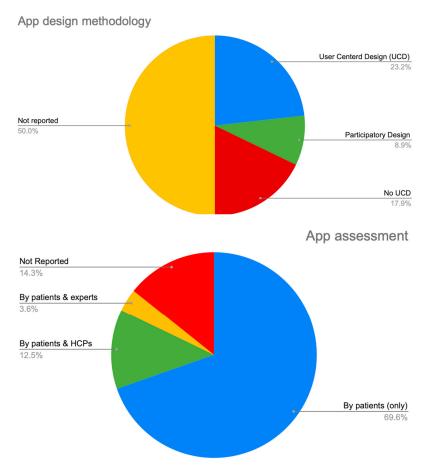


Figure 5. App design methodology and evaluation types (for articles).

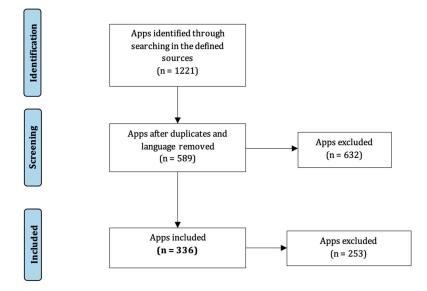


Figure 6. Flowchart of the search strategy and selection of commercial apps.

# 4. Discussion

According to the results, the majority (75.7%) of the scientific articles were published in medical journals. The wide distribution (with 41 different sources for 70 articles) could be interpreted as either the lack of a specialized source for the subject investigated in this study or that there were many reputed sources. The researchers seem to favor journals as the most "prestigious" and impactful sources when publishing their studies. Another significant finding is that only a small percentage of the published articles—7.1% (n = 5)— are in journals without a Journal Citation Reports (JCR) ranking, while all the conferences have a Conference Ranking by Computing Research and Education (CORE) ranking. This confirms that research in the field is a genuine need [5,82].

The quality assessment process revealed that almost all the scientific papers (90%) had a ranking exceeding half of the overall ranking. Six papers [44,64,66,76,78,79] scored 6; five [43,63,74,80,81] scored 5.5; and eight papers [14,35,42,50,53,70,73,75] scored 5. This indicates that for the conducted research, the reviewed papers were suitable.

All the papers were published from 2000 onwards, with the majority of them (70%) being published after 2006, as expected. Even though smartphones underwent substantial growth from 2012 [83–85], mHealth research efforts had already started in 2008 [86]. It is anticipated that the appearance of new and cheaper sensors and wearables will further push the research activities in this direction. Until 2012, most of the efforts were based on personal digital assistant (PDA) devices. Even though almost one-third of the research articles appeared after 2012, one could expect a much larger number of efforts in this period, when the smartphone market was already mature. This, compared to the broader research efforts in the field of mobile health [5,82], highlights that the field of pain had not yet attracted the interest of researchers, at least from a technological point of view.

The research efforts were mostly focused on the iOS operating system. This is interesting since Android is an open-source platform which controls the mobile operating systems (OS) market with almost 73% of the worldwide market share. This can be justified by the fact that iOS was the first operating system in smartphones which dominated the market at its early stage, with numerous characteristics: stability, user friendliness, user acceptance, etc. Moreover, Android devices suffer from heterogeneity with regard to OS versions (Android custom ROMs) and hardware features. On the other hand, half of the commercial apps identified run on Android OS and 38% run on iOS, which aligns with the commercial trend in the mobile market. Regarding the devices, tablets account for only 10.7% of the research efforts. It should be considered that the lifestyle of the contemporary citizen nowadays demands portable, non-intrusive, and ubiquitous solutions. The smartphone is the only device always available during a person's daily activities. That is why all recent efforts have targeted smartphones. The above analysis reveals that new efforts should target both operating platforms. It is also evident that artificial intelligence, big data, and cloud computing were not exploited as expected. An open data philosophy could further support the emergence of novel solutions. Security concerns should be handled very carefully and in accordance with the relevant European Union laws and directives, such as the General Data Protection Regulation [87], Directive 95/46/EC [88], Directive 2002/58/EC [89], and the Charter of Fundamental Rights [90].

The research findings reveal the absence of automatic pain data recording and the challenges in objective pain measurement, while highlighting the need for dedicated wearable pain sensors. Existing smartphone sensors (accelerometer, gyroscope, heart rate, etc.) are inadequate for this purpose. Developing sensors combined with artificial intelligence techniques is crucial. Although self-reports are convenient, they have limitations (they are subjective and inconsistent, they cannot be obtained reliably from mentally impaired persons, etc.). Recent research aims to leverage existing or new sensors for objective pain assessment, integrating data from various physiological signals [91–93]. Most of these efforts implement algorithms and artificial intelligence techniques to combine data that are mainly related to heart rate variability, skin conductivity, blood pressure, tension in face muscles, eye movements, and brain signals. However, no similar endeavors were found in the reviewed literature and commercial apps. The integration of such sensors could boost efforts in the examined domain. This could help towards a generic input method for pain, which now appears to be scattered as it is closely related to the underlying health condition (see Supplementary Materials—Table S7).

Another significant finding is that half of the research efforts did not report any design methodology, while only 23.2% of them followed user-centered design (UCD), 8.9% followed participatory design, and 17.9% reported that they did not follow UCD.

This is consistent with the latest data: a significant number (50,000) of monthly active users (MAUs) were reported by only 7% of mHealth apps [94], while the vast majority of mHealth apps (62%) reported fewer than 1000 MAUs. According to previous research, the average time it takes for an mHealth app to be uninstalled after the last usage session is 8.8 days [95]. Global statistics indicate that mHealth apps exhibit one of the highest uninstall rates, reaching 27.8% [96]. Several factors contribute to this high uninstall rate, including:

- Hardware issues: Problems such as battery drain and device incompatibility.
- First impression: The likelihood of uninstallation is greater during the initial day of app usage.
- Poor user experience: Issues such as excessive bugs, confusing user interface, unattractive aesthetics, overwhelming features, and unfulfilled expectations.
- Steep learning curve: Users find it time-consuming and difficult to learn how to navigate the app.
- Lack of value and desired features: Insufficient usefulness and absence of features that align with users' daily needs.
- Privacy concerns: Too many permission requests without an explanation why.
- Poor engagement: Too many notifications that annoy users or too little communication, which makes them forget the app.
- Content: The content is not updated regularly with evidence-based data due to the limited participation of HCPs.

The above data reveal that a co-design approach is a key factor towards mHealth success.

Another critical issue is the subjective assessment of the app to ensure, at an early stage, that it meets the expectations of its end users. This task is very challenging and time-consuming. However, to date, there is no standard assessment methodology to follow. Regarding the research efforts, almost half of them (57%) did not report any subjective evaluation. Usability evaluation was exclusively performed by real end users (patients) in 69.6% of cases, while HCPs and other experts participated in 12.5% and 3.6%, respectively. Finally, 14.3% did not report any usability evaluation at all. The absence of a standardized evaluation framework significantly impacts the design and sustainable growth of mHealth apps and hinders their long-term adoption. Many commonly used usability scales were initially developed for websites or computer software and do not specifically cater to appfocused assessments. Examples of such scales include the perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use (PUEU) questionnaire [97], the Software Usability Measurement Inventory (SUMI) [98], and the System Usability Scale (SUS) [99]. Consequently, evaluating the "quality" of mHealth apps proves to be a challenging task. In recent years, efforts have been made to develop scales specifically tailored to the rating of mHealth apps, albeit with a focus on specific health domains. Notable examples include the APPLICATIONS scoring system for pregnancy apps [100], the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) for behavior change apps [101], the MedAd-AppQ for medical adherence apps [52,102], the Nutrition App Quality Evaluation for nutrition apps [103], and the Quality Assessment Tool for Evaluating Medical Apps for medication complication apps [104]. However, the reliability and validity of most of these scales are yet to be substantiated with empirical evidence. Several general scales have emerged for the purpose of assessing the quality of mHealth apps, such as the Health Care Apps Evaluation Tool [105], the Organisation for the Review of Care and Health Applications-24 Question Assessment [106], and the Mobile Application Rating Scale (MARS) [107]. Only MARS has been developed to be used by the general public. The limited scope of the aforementioned scales makes it hard to find the right tool to evaluate the quality of an mHealth app targeting the pain domain. Moreover, most scales do not cover all aspects of quality, such as price and value. The heterogeneity in the assessment criteria in the rating scales is another issue for the researchers and developers. We can conclude that there is still a great need to establish a credible and effective method for subjective evaluation purposes [108].

Another problem in the mHealth domain is that, to date, there is no guidance for the end users (patients and healthcare professionals) to find the app that matches their needs. However, recently, several regulations have appeared that can be applied to mHealth apps as well [109–111]. These regulations, such as Medical Device Reporting (MDR), and/or those of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are a step forward towards supporting end users in choosing the appropriate application. Therefore, it should be considered obligatory for developers and researchers to follow them. In our research, none of the identified applications were MDR- and/or FDA-certified.

In conclusion, to optimize the overall quality and retention rate of an mHealth app it is important to ensure:

- Active participatory design, involving different end users and stakeholders (HCPs, patients, and healthcare organizations).
- Appropriate subjective assessment.
- Optimal user experience.
- Communication of the benefits of the app and what the end user is missing out on by not using the app.

In terms of the targeted pain type, the commercial apps are not aligned with the research efforts, as shown in Figure 3 and Figure S8 (Supplementary Materials). More specifically, almost half of the commercial apps (43.8%) focus on general pain, 26.5% on migraine/headache (instead of 8.8% in the research efforts), 13.1% on back pain (instead of 8.8%), and 3.3% on arthritis (instead of 7%). Based on the above, commercial apps seem to focus on the most prevalent conditions, as expected, in order to reach a larger audience. For example, migraine is the third most prevalent illness in the world, while back pain represents 27% of all pain types [112]. The fact that only a minimal number of commercial apps reported the involvement of either patients (2%) or HCPs (10%) in the design and development phases also reveals their commercial and technical focus.

The majority (60.7%) of the research efforts targeted adults. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of research apps specifically focusing on the elderly. The ageing of the population, combined with the latest findings that pain significantly increases with age [113], urges innovative solutions explicitly focusing on this group. It is therefore essential for researchers and developers to design mHealth solutions that take into account the digital literacy or technophobia issues of the end users, as well as other problems (low cognitive level, vision problems, physical impairments, etc.).

### Research Limitations

For scientific studies, one possible limitation is that the scope was mainly targeted at articles published until the end of 2019. As for the commercially available apps, the main limitations of this study include:

- Country and language: English apps in App Store and Play Store.
- Search facilities (especially for app stores): Using a third-party service (such as Vionza) does not guarantee that we receive the same results as those of the official stores.
- We acknowledge the significance of incorporating more recent data and are already working to expand our research in future endeavors to encompass the latest developments, ensuring the timeliness and relevance of our findings. However, we believe that the period we examined is crucial, particularly due to the emergence of COVID-19, which significantly accelerated the proliferation of mHealth apps across various domains. Hence, we consider this timeframe as a distinct era that warrants separate investigation.

### 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study aimed to review the current trends in both the commercial and research domains related to pain-focused apps, with a focus on identifying the key issues and guidelines for the effective development of these apps. Through a systematic review of scientific publications and commercially available apps, the study revealed several critical points that should be considered in future efforts.

The analysis of the features of the included articles and apps highlighted important findings. Firstly, it was observed that commercial and research efforts often target different types of pain, indicating the need for a more comprehensive approach. Additionally, the majority of the examined apps lacked participatory design, suggesting a lack of user involvement in the development process. Furthermore, evaluating the final apps remained a challenge, potentially hindering their success.

The study also emphasized the importance of patient empowerment and shared decision making in the pain domain. The subjective nature of pain necessitates tools that can facilitate pain assessment and management in a more objective and quantifiable way. ICTs, particularly mHealth applications, have the potential to address these challenges and improve outcomes. However, the development of pain-focused apps for the wider market often falls short in the following of scientific guidelines.

Looking ahead, the study suggests that the pain domain is expected to experience a substantial increase in the development of non-intrusive wearables and sensors for pain detection and assessment, along with the integration of artificial intelligence techniques and open data. More research is needed to bridge the gap between commercial and research efforts, enhance user engagement in the development process, and improve the evaluation of pain-focused apps.

In summary, this study provides valuable insights into the current landscape of painfocused apps, highlighting areas for improvement and offering recommendations for future endeavors. By addressing the identified challenges and leveraging the potential of ICTs, it is possible to develop more effective tools for pain assessment, management, and shared decision making and ultimately to improve the quality of care for individuals experiencing chronic pain.

**Supplementary Materials:** The following supporting information can be downloaded at: https: //www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/s23156965/s1, Table S1: Quality assessment criteria (for articles), Table S2: Data extraction (for articles), Table S3: Quality assessment criteria (for commercial apps), Table S4: Data extraction (for commercial apps), Table S5: Selected papers and review results #1, Table S6: Selected papers and review results #2, Table S7: Pain measurement instruments and techniques, Table S8: Pain apps available in App Store for iOS (Vionza), Table S9: Pain apps available in Google Play for Android, Table S10: Pain apps reported in myhealthapps.net, Table S11: Commercial Apps data table, Figure S1: Target population (age) for selected articles, Figure S2: Target population (gender) for selected articles, Figure S3: Data input method for pain assessment (articles), Figure S4: Types of pain assessment (articles), Figure S7: Target platform for commercial pain management apps, Figure S8: Target condition or pain type for commercial pain management apps, Figure S9: Design methodology for commercial pain management apps.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, Y.K.; methodology, Y.K. and A.G.; validation, Y.K. and A.G.; formal analysis, Y.K.; resources, Y.K. and A.G.; writing—original draft preparation, Y.K. and A.G.; writing—review and editing, Y.K. and A.G. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data presented in this study are available in Supplementary Materials.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

# References

- 1. Fayaz, A.; Croft, P.; Langford, R.M.; Donaldson, L.J.; Jones, G.T. Prevalence of chronic pain in the UK: A systematic review and meta-analysis of population studies. *BMJ Open* **2016**, *6*, e010364. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- SIP Platform. Impact of Pain on Society Costs the EU up to 441 Billion Euros Annually. Societal Impact of Pain (SIP). 2017. Available online: https://www.sip-platform.eu/press-area/article/impact-of-pain-on-society-costs-the-eu-up-to-441-billioneuros-annually (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 3. International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) Working Group. ICD-11 for Mortality and Morbidity Statistics 2019. Available online: https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 4. NHS England. Shared Decision Making. 2020. Available online: https://www.england.nhs.uk/shared-decision-making (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- Koumpouros, Y.; Georgoulas, A. A systematic review of mhealth funded R&D activities in EU. Trends, technologies and obstacles. *Inform. Health Soc. Care* 2020, 45, 168–187. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 6. Rosser, B.; Eccleston, C. Smartphone applications for pain management. J. Telemed. Telecare 2011, 17, 308–312. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Reynoldson, C.; Stones, C.; Allsop, M.; Gardner, P.; Bennett, M.I.; Closs, S.J.; Jones, R.; Knapp, P. Assessing the quality and usability of smartphone apps for pain self-management. *Pain Med.* 2014, *15*, 898–909. [CrossRef]
- 8. Lalloo, C.; Jibb, L.A.; Rivera, J.; Agarwal, A.; Stinson, J.N. There's a Pain App for That: Review of patient-targeted smartphone applications for pain management. *Clin. J. Pain* **2015**, *31*, 557–563. [CrossRef]
- 9. Kitchenham, B. *Procedures for Performing Systematic Reviews, Joint Technical Report;* Computer Science Department, Keele University: Keele, UK, 2004.
- 10. Stone, P.W. Popping the (PICO) question in research and evidence-based practice. Appl. Nurs. Res. 2002, 15, 197–198. [CrossRef]
- 11. Google Play Store Official 2020. Available online: https://play.google.com/store (accessed on 29 October 2020).
- 12. Vionza. Vionza—iTunes and App Store Search Engine. 2020. Available online: http://apps.vionza.com (accessed on 29 October 2020).
- 13. Myhealthapps.net. Apps Tried and Tested by People Like You. 2020. Available online: https://myhealthapps.net (accessed on 29 October 2020).
- 14. Peters, M.L.; Sorbi, M.J.; Kruise, D.A.; Kerssens, J.J.; Verhaak, P.F.; Bensing, J.M. Electronic diary assessment of pain, disability and psychological adaptation in patients differing in duration of pain. *Pain* **2000**, *84*, 181–192. [CrossRef]
- 15. Jamison, R.N.; Raymond, S.A.; Levine, J.G.; Slawsby, E.A.; Nedeljkovic, S.S.; Katz, N.P. Electronic diaries for monitoring chronic pain: 1-year validation study. *Pain* **2001**, *91*, 277–285. [CrossRef]
- Jamison, R.N.; Gracely, R.H.; Raymond, S.A.; Levine, J.G.; Marino, B.; Herrmann, T.J.; Daly, M.; Fram, D.; Katz, N.P. Comparative study of electronic vs. paper VAS ratings: A randomized, crossover trial using healthy volunteers. *Pain* 2002, *99*, 341–347. [CrossRef]
- 17. Walker, L.S.; Sorrells, S.C. Brief report: Assessment of children's gastrointestinal symptoms for clinical trials. *J. Pediatr. Psychol.* **2002**, *27*, 303–307. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 18. Goldstein, H.S.; Rabaza, J.R.; Gonzalez, M.; Verdeja, J.C. Evaluation of pain and disability in plug repair with the aid of a personal digital assistant. *Hernia* 2003, *7*, 25–28. [CrossRef]
- 19. Stone, A.A.; Broderick, J.E.; Schwartz, J.E.; Shiffman, S.; Litcher-Kelly, L.; Calvanese, P. Intensive momentary reporting of pain with an electronic diary: Reactivity, compliance, and patient satisfaction. *Pain* **2003**, *104*, 343–351. [CrossRef]
- 20. Van Den Kerkhof, E.G.; Goldstein, D.H.; Lane, J.; Rimmer, M.J.; Van Dijk, J.P. Using a personal digital assistant enhances gathering of patient data on an acute pain management service: A pilot study. *Can. J. Anaesth.* **2003**, *50*, 368–375. [CrossRef]
- 21. Chan, S.S.; Chu, C.P.; Cheng, B.C.; Chen, P.P. Data management using the personal digital assistant in an acute pain service. *Anaesth. Intensive Care* 2004, 32, 81–86. [CrossRef]
- 22. Gaertner, J.; Elsner, F.; Pollmann-Dahmen, K.; Radbruch, L.; Sabatowski, R. Electronic pain diary: A randomized crossover study. *J. Pain Symptom. Manag.* **2004**, *28*, 259–267, Erratum in *J. Pain Symptom. Manag.* **2004**, *28*, 626. [CrossRef]
- 23. Palermo, T.M.; Valenzuela, D.; Stork, P.P. A randomized trial of electronic versus paper pain diaries in children: Impact on compliance, accuracy, and acceptability. *Pain* **2004**, *107*, 213–219. [CrossRef]
- 24. Roelofs, J.; Peters, M.L.; Patijn, J.; Schouten, E.G.; Vlaeyen, J.W. Electronic diary assessment of pain-related fear, attention to pain, and pain intensity in chronic low back pain patients. *Pain* **2004**, *112*, 335–342. [CrossRef]
- 25. Serif, T.; Ghinea, G. Recording of time-varying back-pain data: A wireless solution. *IEEE Trans. Inf. Technol. Biomed.* 2005, 9, 447–458. [CrossRef]
- 26. Aaron, L.A.; Turner, J.A.; Mancl, L.; Brister, H.; Sawchuk, C.N. Electronic diary assessment of pain-related variables: Is reactivity a problem? *J. Pain* 2005, *6*, 107–115. [CrossRef]
- 27. Turner, J.A.; Mancl, L.; Aaron, L.A. Brief cognitive-behavioral therapy for temporomandibular disorder pain: Effects on daily electronic outcome and process measures. *Pain* **2005**, *117*, 377–387. [CrossRef]
- Kearney, N.; Kidd, L.; Miller, M.; Sage, M.; Khorrami, J.; McGee, M.; Cassidy, J.; Niven, K.; Gray, P. Utilising handheld computers to monitor and support patients receiving chemotherapy: Results of a UK-based feasibility study. *Support. Care Cancer* 2006, 14, 742–752. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 29. Aaron, L.A.; Turner, J.A.; Mancl, L.A.; Sawchuk, C.N.; Huggins, K.H.; Truelove, E.L. Daily pain coping among patients with chronic temporomandibular disorder pain: An electronic diary study. *J. Orofac. Pain* **2006**, *20*, 125–137. [PubMed]

- 30. Jamison, R.N.; Raymond, S.A.; Slawsby, E.A.; McHugo, G.J.; Baird, J.C. Pain Assessment in Patients with Low Back Pain: Comparison of Weekly Recall and Momentary Electronic Data. *J. Pain* **2006**, *7*, 192–199. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Roelofs, J.; Peters, M.L.; Patijn, J.; Schouten, E.G.; Vlaeyen, J.W. An electronic diary assessment of the effects of distraction and attentional focusing on pain intensity in chronic low back pain patients. *Br. J. Health Psychol.* 2006, 11 Pt 4, 595–606. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 32. Sorbi, M.J.; Peters, M.L.; Kruise, D.A.; Maas, C.J.M.; Kerssens, J.J.; Verhaak, P.F.; Bensing, J.M. Electronic momentary assessment in chronic pain I: Psychological pain responses as predictors of pain intensity. *Clin. J. Pain* **2006**, *22*, 55–66. [CrossRef]
- Sorbi, M.J.; Peters, M.L.; Kruise, D.A.; Maas, C.J.M.; Kerssens, J.J.; Verhaak, P.F.; Bensing, J.M. Electronic momentary assessment in chronic pain II: Pain and psychological pain responses as predictors of pain disability. *Clin. J. Pain* 2006, 22, 67–81. [CrossRef]
- 34. Stinson, J.; Petroz, G.C.; Tait, G.; Feldman, B.M.; Streiner, D.; McGrath, P.J.; Stevens, B.J. e-Ouch: Usability testing of an electronic chronic pain diary for adolescents with arthritis. *Clin. J. Pain* **2006**, *22*, 295–305. [CrossRef]
- Sorbi, M.J.; Mak, S.B.; Houtveen, J.H.; Kleiboer, A.M.; van Doornen, L.J. Mobile Web-based monitoring and coaching: Feasibility in chronic migraine. J. Med. Internet Res. 2007, 9, e38. [CrossRef]
- Evans, S.R.; Simpson, D.M.; Kitch, D.W.; King, A.; Clifford, D.B.; Cohen, B.A.; McArthur, J.C. A Randomized Trial Evaluating Prosaptide (TM) for HIV-Associated Sensory Neuropathies: Use of an Electronic Diary to Record Neuropathic Pain. *PLoS ONE* 2007, 2, e551. [CrossRef]
- 37. Goldberg, J.; Wolf, A.; Silberstein, S.; Gebeline-Myers, C.; Hopkins, M.; Einhorn, K.; Tolosa, J.E. Evaluation of an electronic diary as a diagnostic tool to study headache and premenstrual symptoms in migraineurs. *Headache* **2007**, *47*, 384–396. [CrossRef]
- Heiberg, T.; Kvien, T.K.; Dale, Ø.; Mowinckel, P.; Aanerud, G.J.; Songe-Møller, A.B.; Uhlig, T.; Hagen, K.B. Daily health status registration (patient diary) in patients with rheumatoid arthritis: A comparison between personal digital assistant and paper-pencil format. *Arthritis Rheum.* 2007, 57, 454–460. [CrossRef]
- Ghinea, G.; Spyridonis, F.; Serif, T.; Frank, A.O. 3-D pain drawings-mobile data collection using a PDA. *IEEE Trans. Inf. Technol. Biomed.* 2008, 12, 27–33. [CrossRef]
- Junker, U.; Freynhagen, R.; Längler, K.; Gockel, U.; Schmidt, U.; Tölle, T.R.; Baron, R.; Kohlmann, T. Paper versus electronic rating scales for pain assessment: A prospective, randomised, cross-over validation study with 200 chronic pain patients. *Curr. Med. Res. Opin.* 2008, 24, 1797–1806. [CrossRef]
- 41. Stinson, J.; Stevens, B.J.; Feldman, B.M.; Streiner, D.; McGrath, P.J.; Dupuis, A.; Gill, N.; Petroz, G.C. Construct validity of a multidimensional electronic pain diary for adolescents with arthritis. *Pain* **2008**, *136*, 281–292. [CrossRef]
- 42. Stinson, J.N.; Petroz, G.C.; Stevens, B.J.; Feldman, B.M.; Streiner, D.; McGrath, P.J.; Gill, N. Working out the kinks: Testing the feasibility of an electronic pain diary for adolescents with arthritis. *Pain Res. Manag.* **2008**, *13*, 375–382. [CrossRef]
- 43. Anatchkova, M.D.; Saris-Baglama, R.N.; Kosinski, M.; Bjorner, J.B. Development and preliminary testing of a computerized adaptive assessment of chronic pain. *J. Pain* **2009**, *10*, 932–943. [CrossRef]
- 44. McClellan, C.B.; Schatz, J.C.; Puffer, E.; Sanchez, C.E.; Stancil, M.T.; Roberts, C.W. Use of handheld wireless technology for a home-based sickle cell pain management protocol. *J. Pediatr. Psychol.* **2009**, *34*, 564–573. [CrossRef]
- Gulur, P.; Rodi, S.W.; Washington, T.A.; Cravero, J.P.; Fanciullo, G.J.; McHugo, G.J.; Baird, J.C. Computer Face Scale for measuring pediatric pain and mood. J. Pain 2009, 10, 173–179. [CrossRef]
- 46. Lewandowski, A.S.; Palermo, T.M.; Kirchner, H.L.; Drotar, D. Comparing diary and retrospective reports of pain and activity restriction in children and adolescents with chronic pain conditions. *Clin. J. Pain* **2009**, *25*, 299–306. [CrossRef]
- 47. Kleiboer, A.; Sorbi, M.; Mérelle, S.; Passchier, J.; van Doornen, L. Utility and preliminary effects of online digital assistance (ODA) for behavioral attack prevention in migraine. *Telemed. J. e-Health Off. J. Am. Telemed. Assoc.* 2009, *15*, 682–690. [CrossRef]
- 48. Sorbi, M.J.; van der Vaart, R. User acceptance of an Internet training aid for migraine self-management. *J. Telemed. Telecare* **2010**, *16*, 20–24. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Hachizuka, M.; Yoshiuchi, K.; Yamamoto, Y.; Iwase, S.; Nakagawa, K.; Kawagoe, K.; Akabayashi, A. Development of a personal digital assistant (PDA) system to collect symptom information from home hospice patients. *J. Palliat. Med.* 2010, 13, 647–651. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Luckmann, R.; Vidal, A. Design of a handheld electronic pain, treatment and activity diary. J. Biomed. Inform. 2010, 43 (Suppl. S5), S32–S36. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Alfvén, G. SMS pain diary: A method for real-time data capture of recurrent pain in childhood. *Acta Paediatr.* 2010, 99, 1047–1053. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Connelly, M.; Anthony, K.K.; Sarniak, R.; Bromberg, M.H.; Gil, K.M.; Schanberg, L.E. Parent pain responses as predictors of daily activities and mood in children with juvenile idiopathic arthritis: The utility of electronic diaries. *J. Pain Symptom Manag.* 2010, 39, 579–590. [CrossRef]
- Connelly, M.; Miller, T.; Gerry, G.; Bickel, J. Electronic momentary assessment of weather changes as a trigger of headaches in children. *Headache* 2010, 50, 779–789. [CrossRef]
- 54. Marceau, L.D.; Link, C.L.; Smith, L.D.; Carolan, S.J.; Jamison, R.N. In-Clinic Use of Electronic Pain Diaries: Barriers of Implementation Among Pain Physicians. J. Pain Symptom Manag. 2010, 40, 391–404. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Connelly, M.; Bromberg, M.H.; Anthony, K.K.; Gil, K.M.; Franks, L.; Schanberg, L.E. Emotion Regulation Predicts Pain and Functioning in Children with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis: An Electronic Diary Study. J. Pediatr. Psychol. 2011, 37, 43–52. [CrossRef]

- 56. Kristjánsdóttir, Ó.; Fors, E.A.; Eide, E.; Finset, A.; van Dulmen, S.; Wigers, S.H.; Eide, H. Written online situational feedback via mobile phone to support self-management of chronic widespread pain: A usability study of a Web-based intervention. BMC Musculoskelet. Disord. 2011, 12, 51. [CrossRef]
- Rosser, B.A.; McCullagh, P.; Davies, R.; Mountain, G.A.; McCracken, L.; Eccleston, C. Technology-mediated therapy for chronic pain management: The challenges of adapting behavior change interventions for delivery with pervasive communication technology. *Telemed. J. e-Health* 2011, 17, 211–216. [CrossRef]
- 58. Wood, C.; von Baeyer, C.L.; Falinower, S.; Moyse, D.; Annequin, D.; Legout, V. Electronic and paper versions of a faces pain intensity scale: Concordance and preference in hospitalized children. *BMC Pediatr.* **2011**, *11*, 87. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Allena, M.; Cuzzoni, M.G.; Tassorelli, C.; Nappi, G.; Antonaci, F. An electronic diary on a palm device for headache monitoring: A preliminary experience. J. Headache Pain 2012, 13, 537–541. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- 60. Baggott, C.; Gibson, F.; Coll, B.; Kletter, R.; Zeltzer, P.; Miaskowski, C. Initial evaluation of an electronic symptom diary for adolescents with cancer. *JMIR Res. Protoc.* 2012, *1*, e23. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Jibb, L.; Stinson, J.; Nathan, P.; Maloney, A.; Dupuis, L.; Gerstle, T.; Alman, B.; Hopyan, S.; Strahlendorf, C.; Yanofsky, R.; et al. Pain Squad: Usability testing of a multidimensional electronic pain diary for adolescents with cancer. J. Pain 2012, 13, S23. [CrossRef]
- 62. Spyridonis, F.; Gronli, T.M.; Hansen, J.; Ghinea, G. Evaluating the usability of a virtual reality-based android application in managing the pain experience of wheelchair users. In Proceedings of the 2012 Annual International Conference of the Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society (EMBC), San Diego, CA, USA, 28 August–1 September 2012; pp. 2460–2463.
- 63. Jacob, E.; Stinson, J.; Duran, J.; Gupta, A.; Gerla, M.; Lewis, M.A.; Zeltzer, L. Usability testing of a Smartphone for accessing a web-based e-diary for self-monitoring of pain and symptoms in sickle cell disease. *J. Pediatr. Hematol. Oncol.* **2012**, *34*, 326–335. [CrossRef]
- 64. Jacob, E.; Duran, J.; Stinson, J.; Lewis, M.A.; Zeltzer, L. Remote monitoring of pain and symptoms using wireless technology in children and adolescents with sickle cell disease. *J. Am. Assoc. Nurse Pract.* **2013**, *25*, 42–54. [CrossRef]
- Nes, A.A.; Eide, H.; Kristjansdottir, O.B.; van Dulmen, S. Web-based, self-management enhancing interventions with e-diaries and personalized feedback for persons with chronic illness: A tale of three studies. *Patient Educ. Couns.* 2013, 93, 451–458. [CrossRef]
- 66. Stinson, J.N.; Jibb, L.A.; Nguyen, C.; Nathan, P.C.; Maloney, A.M.; Dupuis, L.L.; Gerstle, J.T.; Alman, B.; Hopyan, S.; Strahlendorf, C.; et al. Development and testing of a multidimensional iphone pain assessment application for adolescents with cancer. *J. Med. Internet Res.* 2013, 15, e51. [CrossRef]
- 67. Kristjánsdóttir, Ó.; Fors, E.A.; Eide, E.; Finset, A.; Stensrud, T.; van Dulmen, S.; Wigers, S.H.; Eide, H. A Smartphone-Based Intervention with Diaries and Therapist-Feedback to Reduce Catastrophizing and Increase Functioning in Women with Chronic Widespread Pain: Randomized Controlled Trial. J. Med. Internet Res. 2013, 15, e5. [CrossRef]
- 68. Kristjánsdóttir, Ó.; Fors, E.A.; Eide, E.; Finset, A.; Stensrud, T.L.; van Dulmen, S.; Wigers, S.H.; Eide, H. A smartphone-based intervention with diaries and therapist feedback to reduce catastrophizing and increase functioning in women with chronic widespread pain. part 2: 11-month follow-up results of a randomized trial. J. Med. Internet Res 2013, 15, e72. [CrossRef]
- 69. Blödt, S.; Pach, D.; Roll, S.; Witt, C.M. Effectiveness of app-based relaxation for patients with chronic low back pain (Relaxback) and chronic neck pain (Relaxneck): Study protocol for two randomized pragmatic trials. *Trials* **2014**, *15*, 490. [CrossRef]
- 70. Garcia-Palacios, A.; Herrero, R.; Belmonte, M.A.; Castilla, D.; Guixeres, J.; Molinari, G.; Baños, R.M. Ecological momentary assessment for chronic pain in fibromyalgia using a smartphone: A randomized crossover study. *Eur. J. Pain* **2014**, *18*, 862–872. [CrossRef]
- Jibb, L.A.; Stevens, B.J.; Nathan, P.C.; Seto, E.; Cafazzo, J.A.; Stinson, J.N. A smartphone-based pain management app for adolescents with cancer: Establishing system requirements and a pain care algorithm based on literature review, interviews, and consensus. *JMIR Res. Protoc.* 2014, 3, e15. [CrossRef]
- 72. Pombo, N.; Araújo, P.; Viana, J.; da Costa, M.D. Evaluation of a ubiquitous and interoperable computerised system for remote monitoring of ambulatory post-operative pain: A randomised controlled trial. *Technol. Health Care* **2014**, 22, 63–75. [CrossRef]
- Bakshi, N.; Stinson, J.N.; Ross, D.; Lukombo, I.; Mittal, N.; Joshi, S.V.; Belfer, I.; Krishnamurti, L. Development, content validity, and user review of a web-based multidimensional pain diary for adolescent and young adults with sickle cell disease. *Clin. J. Pain* 2015, *31*, 580–590. [CrossRef]
- 74. Huguet, A.; McGrath, P.J.; Wheaton, M.; Mackinnon, S.P.; Rozario, S.; Tougas, M.E.; Stinson, J.N.; MacLean, C. Testing the Feasibility and Psychometric Properties of a Mobile Diary (myWHI) in Adolescents and Young Adults with Headaches. *JMIR Mhealth Uhealth* **2015**, *3*, e39. [CrossRef]
- Jonassaint, C.R.; Shah, N.; Jonassaint, J.; De Castro, L. Usability and Feasibility of an mHealth Intervention for Monitoring and Managing Pain Symptoms in Sickle Cell Disease: The Sickle Cell Disease Mobile Application to Record Symptoms via Technology (SMART). *Hemoglobin* 2015, 39, 162–168. [CrossRef]
- 76. Maguire, R.; Ream, E.; Richardson, A.; Connaghan, J.; Johnston, B.; Kotronoulas, G.; Pedersen, V.; McPhelim, J.; Pattison, N.; Smith, A.; et al. Development of a novel remote patient monitoring system: The advanced symptom management system for radiotherapy to improve the symptom experience of patients with lung cancer receiving radiotherapy. *Cancer Nurs.* 2015, 38, E37–E47. [CrossRef]
- 77. Nguyen, A.M.; Humphrey, L.; Kitchen, H.; Rehman, T.; Norquist, J.M. A qualitative study to develop a patient-reported outcome for dysmenorrhea. *Qual. Life Res.* 2015, 24, 181–191. [CrossRef]

- Fortier, M.A.; Chung, W.W.; Martinez, A.; Gago-Masague, S.; Sender, L. Pain buddy: A novel use of m-health in the management of children's cancer pain. *Comput. Biol. Med.* 2016, 76, 202–214. [CrossRef]
- Hochstenbach, L.M.; Zwakhalen, S.M.; Courtens, A.M.; van Kleef, M.; de Witte, L.P. Feasibility of a mobile and web-based intervention to support self-management in outpatients with cancer pain. *Eur. J. Oncol. Nurs.* 2016, 23, 97–105. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Ingadottir, B.; Blondal, K.; Thue, D.; Zoega, S.; Thylen, I.; Jaarsma, T. Development, Usability, and Efficacy of a Serious Game to Help Patients Learn About Pain Management After Surgery: An Evaluation Study. *JMIR Serious Games* 2017, 5, e10. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Jibb, L.A.; Cafazzo, J.A.; Nathan, P.C.; Seto, E.; Stevens, B.J.; Nguyen, C.; Stinson, J.N. Development of a mhealth real-time pain self-management app for adolescents with cancer: An iterative usability testing study. J. Pediatr. Oncol. Nurs. 2017, 34, 283–294. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Koumpouros, Y.; Georgoulas, A. mHealth R&D Activities in Europe. In *M-Health Innovations for Patient-Centered Care;* Mount-zoglou, A., Ed.; A Volume in the Advances in Healthcare Information Systems and Administration (AHISA) Book Series; IGI Global: Hershey, PA, USA, 2016; pp. 20–51. ISSN 2328-1243. [CrossRef]
- Statista. Number of Mobile Phone Users Worldwide 2015–2020 | Statista. 2019. Available online: https://www.statista.com/ statistics/274774/forecast-of-mobile-phone-users-worldwide (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- Statista. Number of Smartphone Users Worldwide 2014–2020 | Statista. 2019. Available online: https://www.statista.com/ statistics/330695/number-of-smartphone-users-worldwide (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- Statista. Projected Global mHealth Market Size 2012–2020 | Statistic. 2019. Available online: https://www.statista.com/statistics/ 295771/mhealth-global-market-size (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 86. Koumpouros, Y.; Kafazis, T. Wearables and mobile technologies in Autism Spectrum Disorder interventions: A systematic literature review. *Res. Autism. Spectr. Disord.* **2019**, *66*, 101405, ISSN 1750-9467. [CrossRef]
- European Commission. General Data Protection Regulation: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council. Available online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A52012PC0011 (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- European Parliament and the Council of 24 October 1995. Directive 95/46/EC: Protection of Individuals with Regard to the Processing of Personal Data and the Free Movement of Such Data 1995. Available online: <a href="https://edps.europa.eu/data-protection/our-work/publications/legislation/directive-9546ec\_en">https://edps.europa.eu/data-protection/our-work/publications/legislation/directive-9546ec\_en</a> (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- European Parliament and the Council of 12 July 2002. Directive 2002/58/EC: Processing of Personal Data and the Protection of Privacy in the Electronic Communications Sector 2002. Available online: https://edps.europa.eu/sites/edp/files/publication/ dir\_2002\_58\_en.pdf (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 90. European Parliament. Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/C 364/01). *Official Journal of the European Communities* 2000. Available online: www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\_en.pdf (accessed on 29 October 2020).
- Cronin, J.; Harma, A.S.; Des-Saud, N.M.D. Pain Management Wearable Device (WO 2016/124482 Al). World Intellectual Property Organization International Bureau 2016. Available online: https://patentimages.storage.googleapis.com/df/4a/69/7217dbd9 baeaa5/WO2016124482A1.pdf (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 92. Imec. Technology for Pain and Stress Monitoring Devices 2020. Available online: https://www.imec-int.com/en/connected-health-solutions/pain-and-stress-monitoring (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 93. Premier Research. Wearable Wrist Sensors Enable Detection of Stress, Seizures, and Pain. 2020. Available online: https://premier-research.com/perspectives-wearable-wrist-sensors-detection-stress-seizures-pain (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- Research2Guidance. mHealth Economics—How mHealth App Publishers Are Monetizing Their Apps. 2018. Available online: https://research2guidance.com/product/mhealth-economics-how-mhealth-app-publishers-are-monetizing-their-apps (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 95. Benes, R. Most Apps Get Deleted Within a Week of Last Use. Insider Intelligence 2018. Available online: https://www.emarketer. com/content/most-apps-get-deleted-within-a-week (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- Statista. Mobile App Categories with Highest Uninstall Rate 2018. 2018. Available online: https://www.statista.com/statistics/ 892975/highest-uninstall-rate-app-categories/ (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 97. Price, M.; Sawyer, T.; Harris, M.; Skalka, C. Usability Evaluation of a Mobile Monitoring System to Assess Symptoms After a Traumatic Injury: A Mixed-Methods Study. *JMIR Ment. Health* **2016**, *3*, e3. [CrossRef]
- O'Malley, G.; Dowdall, G.; Burls, A.; Perry, I.J.; Curran, N. Exploring the usability of a mobile app for adolescent obesity management. *MIR Mhealth Uhealth* 2014, 2, e29. [CrossRef]
- 99. Brooke, J. SUS: A "quick and dirty" usability scale. In *Usability Evaluation in Industry*; Jordan, P.W.T.B., Weerdmeester, B.A., McClelland, A.L., Eds.; Taylor and Francis: London, UK, 1996; pp. 189–194.
- Chyjek, K.; Farag, S.; Chen, K.T. Rating pregnancy wheel applications using the APPLICATIONS Scoring System. *Obstet. Gynecol.* 2015, 125, 1478–1483. [CrossRef]
- McMillan, B.; Hickey, E.; Patel, M.G.; Mitchell, C. Quality assessment of a sample of mobile app-based health behavior change interventions using a tool based on the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence behavior change guidance. *Patient Educ. Couns.* 2016, 99, 429–435. [CrossRef]

- Ali, E.E.; Teo, A.K.S.; Goh, S.X.L.; Chew, L.; Yap, K.Y. MedAd-AppQ: A quality assessment tool for medication adherence apps on iOS and android platforms. *Res. Soc. Adm. Pharm. RSAP* 2018, 14, 1125–1133. [CrossRef]
- 103. DiFilippo, K.N.; Huang, W.; Chapman-Novakofski, K.M. A new tool for nutrition App Quality Evaluation (AQEL): Development, Validation, and Reliability Testing. *JMIR Mhealth Uhealth* 2017, 5, e163. [CrossRef]
- Loy, J.S.; Ali, E.E.; Yap, K.Y. Quality assessment of medical apps that target medication-related problems. J. Manag. Care Spec. Pharm. 2016, 22, 1124–1140. [CrossRef]
- 105. Jin, M.; Kim, J. Development and evaluation of an evaluation tool for healthcare smartphone applications. *Telemed. J. e-Health* **2015**, *21*, 831–837. [CrossRef]
- Leigh, S.; Ouyang, J.; Mimnagh, C. Effective? Engaging? Secure? Applying the ORCHA-24 framework to evaluate apps for chronic insomnia disorder. *Evid. Based. Ment. Health* 2017, 20, e20. [CrossRef]
- 107. Stoyanov, S.R.; Hides, L.; Kavanagh, D.J.; Zelenko, O.; Tjondronegoro, D.; Mani, M. Mobile app rating scale: A new tool for assessing the quality of health mobile apps. *JMIR Mhealth Uhealth* **2015**, *3*, e27. [CrossRef]
- Koumpouros, Y. A Systematic Review on Existing Measures for the Subjective Assessment of Rehabilitation and Assistive Robot Devices. J. Healthc. Eng. 2016, 2016, 1048964. [CrossRef]
- EU MDR. The European Union Medical Device Regulation of 2017. Available online: https://eumdr.com (accessed on 29 October 2020).
- 110. Center for Devices and Radiological Health—CDRH. Device Software Functions Including Mobile Medical Applications. U.S. Food and Drug Administration 2019. Available online: https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/digital-health-center-excellence/device-software-functions-including-mobile-medical-applications (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 111. Center for Devices and Radiological Health Center—CDRH. Policy for Device Software Functions and Mobile Medical Applications. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Food and Drug Administration 2019. Available online: https://www.fda.gov/media/80958/download (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 112. The Good Body. Chronic Pain Statistics: Facts, Figures and Research [Infographic]. *The Good Body.* 2020. Available online: https://www.thegoodbody.com/chronic-pain-statistics/ (accessed on 1 August 2023).
- 113. Zelaya, C.E.; Dahlhamer, J.M.; Lucas, J.W.; Connor, E.M. Chronic pain and high-impact chronic pain among U.S. Adults, 2019. NCHS Data Brief. 2020, 90, 1–8.

**Disclaimer/Publisher's Note:** The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.