

# The Link Between Income Inequality and Physical Pain

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## **Harvard Business Review:**

The United States is in a pain crisis. The use of pain killers increased by 50% from 2006 to 2012 and one recent estimate put the cost of physical pain on the U.S. economy at \$635 billion — a 1,000% increase from 20 years earlier. At the same time, a widening income gap, growing sense of financial desperation, and erosion of the middle class have elevated economic insecurity to the top of the political agenda in the United States.

A growing body of evidence suggests that this fiscal pain and physical pain are linked and reinforce each other. Over numerous studies, both in the lab and in the field, we have found that the experience of economic insecurity leads people to experience physical pain. Analyses of household consumption data, surveys, and controlled experiments demonstrate a causal link between economic insecurity and pain.

Read the whole story: [Harvard Business Review](#)