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Engel (1959) suggested that negative physical or emotional experiences in childhood predispose to the development of chronic pain. Studies have shown that physical and sexual abuse in early life is connected with chronic pain. Emotional adversities are much less studied causes contributing to the development of chronic pain and disability. Early emotional abuse, neglect, maltreatment and other adversities are deleterious childhood experiences which, according to Young's schema theory (1990), produce early maladaptive schemas (EMSs). The primary goal of this study was to examine whether early adversities were more common in chronic pain patients than in a control group. A total of 271 (53% women) first-visit chronic pain patients and 331 (86% women) control participants took part in the study. Their socio-demographic data, pain variables and pain disability were measured. To estimate EMSs the Young Schema Questionnaire was used. Chronic pain patients scored higher EMSs reflecting incapacity to perform independently, catastrophic beliefs and pessimism. The most severely disabled chronic pain patients showed an increase in all the EMSs in the Disconnection and Rejection schema domain, namely Abandonment/Instability, Mistrust/Abuse, Emotional Deprivation, Defectiveness/Shame and Social Isolation/Alienation EMSs. The results of the study suggested that chronic pain patients had suffered early emotional maltreatment.