

Pain Management Matters

What is Pain?

Pain is a complex physical and psychological individual human experience that is entirely what a person says it is. Pain can only truly be appreciated by the person experiencing the pain. A person's pain is influenced by attitudes, beliefs, personality, and social, cultural factors, and can affect emotional and mental wellbeing (Pain Australia, 2019).

What is Pain Management?

Pain Management is a medical approach that draws on disciplines in science and alternative healing to study the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of pain (Pain Australia, 2019).

How can Pain Management be successful?

To be successful in managing pain there needs to be a team of professional health carers who can have open, non-judgemental conversations with the person having pain, their family and carers. The team need to understand what the pain means for the person, their family and carers and to what extent it impacts the daily activities of living of the person with pain.

The person suffering the pain needs to honestly maintain records (diaries) of the pain including:

- What provokes the pain
- An explanation of the type of pain
- Does the pain spread/radiate anywhere?
- The severity of the pain using a [pain score](#)
- The length of the time the pain persists.

This information assists the team to understand what the pain means to the person, their family/carers and how they can maximise the quality of life of the person by alleviating pain symptoms.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia has a [pain diary template](#) that is free to download and which will help people to have better conversations about pain.



What can Manage pain?

- **Biomedical Therapy** – such as surgery, nerve block and medicines
- **Psychological Treatments** – such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- **Physical Therapy** – such as physiotherapy, exercise physiology, occupational therapy
- **Complementary Alternative Medical (CAM) Therapies** – such as naturopathy, homeopathy, meditation, prayer, art or music therapy, massage, acupuncture, aromatherapy, reiki.

A care plan is developed by the team to alleviate the pain. Factors that will be considered in the individualised care plan for each person include the persons attitudes, beliefs, personality, social and cultural factors, as well as the information from the pain diary.

Pain management includes effectively assessing, implementing, and evaluating the person, their pain and other symptoms and must always be flexible to meet the person's individual needs.

Medications used in pain control must be balanced against their potential side effects.

Types of Pain Medicines

- **Non-Opioids** – mild pain relievers such as anti-inflammatories and paracetamol
- **Opioids** – medium to strong pain relievers such as morphine, fentanyl and codeine
- **Other** – relieves pain by other pathways such as Gabapentin, clonazepam, diazepam (Palliative Care Expert Group, 2016).

Potential Side Effects of Medicines

Side effects, also called adverse reactions, are the unintended effects of a medicine. All medicines have possible side effects, but not everybody will experience them. When people are recommended a medicine, it's important they are allowed to ask questions about the medicines and their function as well as the potential side effects of the medicine (NPS Medicinewise, 2019).



Other Resources

Palliative Care Australia	Facts about morphine and other opioids.
American Cancer Society	Pain diary (101kb pdf).
NPS Medicinewise	Personal Medicines list

References

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