

Chronic Pain as a disease in its own right...End suffering now.

Experts in medicine are agreed on one fact – Chronic pain is a disease in its own right , millions of people suffer from it but less than 2% end up seeing a pain specialist – simply because patients and health care companies believe there is no treatment and so quietly suffer.

In 2009: World Health Organisation declared that they believe that Chronic Pain is a disease in its own right.

In Malaysia – there is a dearth of resource and information.

In Europe in the last 5 years there has been a big push for recognition of pain as a disease in its own right and hence all the treatments i.e. physical therapy, medication optimisation , minimally invasive surgery should be offered and indeed supported as it is not acceptable for people to suffer significant pain in the 21st century.

The first step is educating both public and allied health professionals.

Knowledge is power.

Many patients look for a cure or an exact cause for their chronic pain; this is as futile as looking for a cause for osteoarthritis, hypertension or diabetes. It is a disease of long term condition and impacts on lifestyle and function.

Managing better pain relief, after appropriate assessment and investigations to rule out underlying sinister pathology, is a reality with newer drugs, short term targeted injections with local anaesthetic and steroids and neuromodulation (procedures to alter the perception and sensation of pain).

Chronic pain (pain persistent for more than 3 months) can be due to nerves, joints, muscles and ligaments in the surrounding areas. Continued acute pain that is not treated can repetitively send messages and signals of pain to the brain, **resulting in a 'hypersensitive central nervous system and nerve endings'**

Repeated investigations, operations and surgical procedures can aggravate the pain pathway if there is no pathology.

Central sensitisation is when the repetitive pain signals go unchecked and larger areas of the brain are affected and thus pain can arise from any part of your body. This is the mechanism by which we believe pain arises in a more wide spread fashion. It can be due to muscles (fibromyalgia) , nerves (neuropathic pain) or complex joint pain (arthritis). There are a certain subset of people who are more predisposed to pain e.g. those who have other widespread disease such as irritable bowel disease, chronic headache, chronic fatigue and other neuromuscular disorders.

Pain is what the person says it is, existing when and where the person says it

does." (McCaffery & Beebe, 1999)

The patient is the centre of focus.

Treatment options include medicines, physiotherapy, new nerve stimulation techniques and western (dry needling) and minimally invasive procedures. These are aligned with current evidence of best clinical practice.

This is the first such centre in Malaysia. Malaysians are very stoical when it comes to pain and often 'put up' and silently suffer. This need no longer is the case.

Timely, sound and evidence based interventions is the gold standard of care.

Don't let Pain limit you.