

Holding It Together – An Interdisciplinary Programme That Works

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It has been well documented that patients with chronic pain are often challenged with a constellation of issues as the consequences of the long, persistent pain they have been experiencing. High level of pain behaviors, the elevated use of often unnecessary medical resources and medications, physical disability, high level of psychological distress, misunderstanding and miscommunication with people around them are amongst the non-medical issues that subsequently lead them to failure to carry out normal social and vocational roles. Treatments focusing merely on bio-medical and pathophysiological aspects of chronic often result in patients feeling further helpless and hopeless about their condition. Hence, a biopsychosocial approach has been introduced to assess and manage these patients in a more holistic manner, assisting them to acknowledge those psychosocial issues that potentially can be the factors contributing to the maintaining of their chronic pain condition. This approach invariably requires healthcare providers from a variety of disciplines working together in an integrated way with joint goals and with ongoing communication. This session will further elaborate the experience of coordinating an interdisciplinary pain management program in an Asian country; and discuss the issues and challenges in sustaining the program. The spirit of team work by respecting each other's expertise/discipline is the core principle in this programme in order to maximise the programme outcomes that often found to be beneficial for the patients.