

Introduction

We are pleased to introduce this second volume on chronic neuropathic pain to the journal readership. We feel that the articles will expand the foundation already laid in the prior thematic issue. The authors for this issue come from diverse backgrounds but share a common denominator of being practicing clinicians who treat chronic neuropathic pain on a daily basis.

Nicholson introduces this special issue by providing a critical overview of the area of chronic pain with suggestions for important directions for research and treatment in the future. Specifically, he prescribes a deeper exploration of the interface between psychosocial and biological components, or the neurobiological substrate mediating psychological effects or brain-behavior relationships involved in chronic pain. Importantly, this overview, written from the perspective of a psychologist working in a tertiary care chronic pain program, describes a method to assist in the differentiation of central from peripheral and organic from psychosocial components and outlines a novel neuropsychobiological model.

Gonzales, Martelli and Baker employ a biopsychosocial conceptualization in providing an overview of a method and approach for psychological evaluation of patients with chronic pain. Because of the variability in pain related outcomes, a multidimensional assessment approach seems essential. This article provides a practical introduction and summary of numerous instruments which complement a psychological assessment conducted within a multidimensional framework.

Kirsch, one of the pioneers of microcurrent stimulation, reviews applications of cranial electrical stimulation for chronic pain management. For pain management practitioners, this article will serve to increase awareness of the existence of a non-medication treatment for reduction of pain in chronic pain patients that is effective and also inexpensive, safe and easy to use. Notably, Kirsch builds a case of strong support for what appears to be a safe and effective treatment for pain,

especially chronic pain and its associated symptomatology of anxiety, depression and insomnia.

Nicholson, in a survey of the literature concerning the relationship of pain, cognition and traumatic brain injury, notes that cognitive difficulties are common in acute or chronic pain, independent from any possible TBI. Attention, memory, speed of processing, and executive control seem most affected. Implications for neuropsychological assessment and differential diagnosis in cases of mild TBI are mentioned. Further, it is suggested that pain and related problems may account for most of the difficulties in those presenting with the persisting post-concussive syndrome. Finally, it is noted that there also appears to be considerable variability in the nature and magnitude of cognitive difficulties associated with pain and that it is unclear to what degree cognitive difficulties might be due to disruptive or interfering effects of pain versus associated problems such as fatigue, depression, anxiety, medication side effects, or other factors.

Martelli, Liljedahl, Nicholson and Zasler provide an introduction to Internet resources germane to chronic pain and its management. Rudimentary guidelines for efficient accessing of information are offered, along with nearly 200 useful Internet web links for professionals, patients, family members and other interested persons who assess, treat or cope with chronic pain. Relevant resources include numerous organizations, medical, psychological assessment and practical treatment strategies, assessment and treatment reviews, support groups, list serve groups, advocacy resources, news and assistive technology resources.

Lastly, Collins provides an interesting review of Kirsch's book entitled, *The Science Behind Cranial Electrotherapy Stimulation*.

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