An Integrative Approach to Pain

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Pain

- Affects >100 million Americans, more than those with heart disease, cancer, and diabetes combined.
- 25.3 million adults suffer from daily chronic pain, while 23.4 million report severe pain.
- Incidence of chronic low back pain, neck pain, and arthritic pain as high as 29%, 15.7%, and 28%, respectively, in adult population.


Chronic Pain

- Complex, severe and debilitating condition - considerable reduction in function & quality of life.
- Pain due to dysfunction of nerves, spinal cord or brain (neuropathic pain), or persistent pain caused by other non-malignant conditions, such as low-back pain, TMD, or pain due to inflammatory arthritic conditions.

Neuropathic Pain

- Direct consequence of a lesion or disease of the somatosensory system (essentially all sensory experiences other than vision, hearing, taste and smell).
- Trauma, poorly controlled diabetes, side effect from drugs, infections (e.g., HIV, shingles), and autoimmune conditions (e.g., multiple sclerosis) can all lead to neuropathic pain.
- Treatment: antidepressants, anticonvulsants, opioids, and topical agents.
- Neuropathic pain can be particularly difficult to treat and is often accompanied by anxiety, depression, insomnia, and fibromyalgia.

Central Sensitization

- **Heightened sensitivity** to pain and sensation of touch (also to other senses like light or sound).
- Nervous system in **persistent state of heightened reactivity** - simple touch can be registered as painful or uncomfortable.
- Increases feelings of **anxiety, emotional distress, malaise, and poor concentration**.

**Opiates**

- Opioid industry more than $13 billion-a-year. Americans comprise ~4% of the world's population, we use > 30% of all opioids. US accounts for ~100% of hydrocodone (e.g., Vicodin), 81% for oxycodone (e.g., Percocet).
- **91 Americans die** every day from opioid overdose; 50% from prescription opiates.
- Clinicians ill-prepared to deal with complex problems associated with chronic pain: **creates easy atmosphere for prescribing pain meds.**
- Pharmaceutical companies pumped millions of dollars into telling health professionals and public that medications were **safe and effective for chronic pain**, claims now being challenged in courtrooms across the US.


The Down Side to Long-Term Use

- **Opioids incredibly effective for short-term pain relief** but risks often outweigh benefits for many people living with chronic pain.
- Review found for chronic non-cancer pain: absolute event rate for any adverse event with opioids was **78% with medium and long term use (average 6-16 weeks)** compared to placebo.
- Tolerance (need more medication for same pain relief), **increased sensitivity to pain, physical dependence, lower sex drive, confusion, constipation, dry mouth, nausea and vomiting**, and an increased risk of **new onset depression** after 3 months of use.

Ibuprofen and Naproxen

- Prospective Randomized Evaluation of Celecoxib Integrated Safety vs Ibuprofen or Naproxen (PRECISION) trial and individual patient data of nearly 50,000 patients concluded “evidence would support avoidance of NSAID use, if possible, in patients with, or at high risk for, cardiovascular disease.”
- If used, shortest-duration and lowest effective dose should be chosen, given evidence that risk is duration- and dose-dependent.
- Study found ibuprofen use was associated with a significant increase in systolic blood pressure and higher incidence of newly diagnosed hypertension.


Aspirin and GI Bleeding

- Systematic review: low dose aspirin associated with double the risk for upper GI bleeding and 80% increased risk for lower GI bleeding.
- With increased risk from low-dose aspirin (81-85 mg per day), deeply concerning about long-term use of high dose aspirin (2-3 g/d) for pain.
- PPI can protect against bleed but comes with own risks.


Acetaminophen (Paracetamol)

- Acetaminophen has superior safety to ibuprofen, naproxen, and aspirin; commonly recommended as a first line therapy for pain.
- Maximum “safe” dose is 4000 mg per day but found in more than 600 OTC and prescription medications (e.g., Vicodin), dose can add up without realizing it.
**Adverse Effects**

- 2017 report found acetaminophen responsible for nearly half of acute liver failure cases in US - leading cause of liver transplantation.
- Study of 64,839 men and women (ages 50-76 years) followed for up to 8 years found almost two-fold increased risk of blood cancers associated with high use of acetaminophen (≥ 4 days/week for ≥ 4 years).

**Blunts Empathy?**

- Ohio State University research found in healthy college students, acetaminophen reduces user's ability to feel empathy for another's pain.
- This research must be confirmed by larger studies but hard not to find the researcher's statement somewhat chilling:
  - “Because empathy regulates prosocial and antisocial behavior, these drug-induced reductions in empathy raise concerns about the broader social side effects of acetaminophen, which is taken by almost a quarter of adults in the United States each week.”

**The Need for Alternatives**

- Keen interest by researchers, clinicians and the public for additional/other options for managing chronic pain.
- Chronic pain is the leading indication for use of complementary and integrative medicine with 33% of adults and 12% of children in the US using it for this purpose.
- Although advances have been made in treatments for chronic pain, it remains inadequately controlled for many people.
IOM Report

• A cultural transformation is necessary to better prevent, assess, treat, and understand pain of all types.
• Healthcare providers should increasingly aim at tailoring pain care to each person’s experience and self-management of pain should be promoted.


A Broader Approach

• Truly integrated approach would include treatments that address mind-body (e.g., meditation, yoga, tai-chi), nutrition (e.g., emphasis on plant-based diet to reduce inflammation), manual medicine (e.g., massage, chiropractic), pain modulation (e.g., acupuncture, massage, botanicals, nutraceuticals), sleep and mood (e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy, guided imagery, botanicals, nutraceuticals).

Where Are They, Where Do They Want to Go

• An integrated approach will move beyond the pain and explore….
  • Sleep and Rest
  • Work/Career
  • Diet and Food
  • Relationships
  • Mind-Body
  • Meaning and Purpose

The Role of Diet in Pain

• Role of diet recognized in numerous pain conditions but likely contributes to many pain disorders:
  • Irritable bowel syndrome
  • Inflammatory bowel disease
  • Migraine (food triggers, as well as fasting induced headaches)
Dietary Inflammatory Index (DII)

- Inflammation in the body often driven by eating a pro-inflammatory dietary pattern. Inflammatory mediators can impact pain, mood, heart disease, insulin sensitivity, and DNA repair.
- The test can be downloaded as an app: Dietary Inflammatory Index (DII Screener).
- Patients can take the test and there is a mechanism for them to submit the results to you.

Inflammatory Food Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD</th>
<th>SERVING SIZE</th>
<th>SERVING SIZE (GRAMS)</th>
<th>IF RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGAVE NECTAR</td>
<td>1 TBSP</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALMOND BUTTER</td>
<td>¼ CUP</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEESE, CHEDDAR</td>
<td>1 OUNCE</td>
<td>28.35</td>
<td>-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHICKEN BREAST, RSTD</td>
<td>3 OUNCES</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILK, WHOLE</td>
<td>1 CUP</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLIVE OIL</td>
<td>1 TBSP</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONIONS, COOKED</td>
<td>½ CUP</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICE, WHITE</td>
<td>1 CUP</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>-153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPINACH</td>
<td>1 CUP</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALMON, SOHO BAKED</td>
<td>3 OUNCES</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TURMERIC</td>
<td>½ TSP</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Omega 3 Fatty Acids from Plants and Animals

- Dark green vegetables, walnuts, freshly ground flax seeds and other plant foods.
- Cold water fish, fish oil, fresh seaweed, clean animal foods like free range chicken, eggs, and grass fed beef.

Resolution Biology

- Research shows that resolution of inflammation is an active, programmed response.
- Omega 3 fatty acids produce specialized pro-resolving mediators (SPM) – resolvins, protectins and maresins.
- Increasing omega 3 fatty acids in the diet can help with mood, pain and promote overall health.
Canadians and Omega 3

- Omega-3 Index indicates % of EPA+DHA in red blood cell fatty acids.
- Canadian government found the mean Omega-3 Index level of Canadians aged 20-79 was 4.5%. Fewer than 3% of adults had levels associated with low CHD risk; 43% had levels associated with high risk.
- What about chronic pain patients? Should we assess omega 3 fatty acid level to optimize their "anti-inflammatory" activity?
- I recommend 2-3 grams per day omega 3 fatty acids (concentrated triglyceride form.


Musculoskeletal Pain

- Musculoskeletal conditions are leading cause of long-term pain and disability around the globe.
- Aging, obesity and lack of regular physical activity are major risk factors for arthritis and back pain.
- In US, 52 million American adults have arthritis and by 2040, that number will reach 78.4 million, or roughly 26% of all adults.


Body Weight

- For every 12 pounds of weight gain, there is a 36% increased risk for developing OA.
- Lumbar spine and knee two primary sites for pain in obese individuals. Reduction of body fat lowers mechanical and inflammatory stressors that contribute to OA.
- Weight loss strongly associated with a reduction in pain.

Anti-Inflammatory Herbs

- There are many, but some to consider include:
  - Salix containing plants
  - Turmeric (Curcuma longa and other species)
  - Ginger (Zingiber officinale)
  - Boswellia (Boswellia serrata)
  - Chinese skullcap (Scutellaria baicalensis)
  - Devil’s Claw (Harpagophytum procumbens)
  - Cat’s Claw (Uncaria tomentosa)
  - Licorice (Glycyrrhiza glabra, G. uralensis)
**Turmeric (Curcuma longa)**

- Family: Zingiberaceae (ginger family)
- More than 130 species worldwide
- Part Used: Rhizome
- Perennial plant grown in tropical areas, most grown in India, they consume 80% of crop. Used in meat, fish and vegetable curries.
- Long history of medicinal use ~4,000 years.
- In ancient Ayurvedic literature, called Jayanti, meaning “one who is victorious over disease.”

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**Turmeric: the Curcuminoids**

- Among 300 compounds in turmeric are curcuminoid pigments.
- Curcumin (diferuloylmethane) is the main curcuminoid.
- Other compounds in whole rhizome aid in absorption (more later).

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**Turmeric for Arthritis**

- Profound anti-inflammatory effects; studies show turmeric reduces pain in rheumatoid and osteoarthritis.
- Systematic review concluded that RCTs of turmeric/curcumin provide evidence that supports the efficacy of turmeric extract in treatment of arthritis equivalent to pain medications.

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**Turmeric + Boswellia (Boswellia serrata)**

- 12 week randomized, double-blind, placebo controlled study in 201 people with osteoarthritis (40-70 years of age) found that 350 mg curcuminoids + 150 mg boswellic acid taken three times daily led to statistically significant effect on physical performance tests and WOMAC joint pain index compared to placebo. Well tolerated, no significant adverse events.
Review on Turmeric and Boswellia

- Tuft's systematic review 11 RCTs. Both curcumin and boswellia formulations statistically significantly more effective than placebo for pain relief and functional improvement.
- Curcumin showed no statistically significant differences in efficacy outcomes compared to NSAIDs; patients on curcumin significantly less likely to experience gastrointestinal adverse events.
- Results suggest curcumin and boswellia formulations could be valuable addition to OA treatment regimens by relieving symptoms while reducing safety risks.

Turmeric: Cardiovascular

- Meta-analysis 20 studies found a significant decrease in serum triglycerides and elevation of HDL-C.
- A 12 week randomized, placebo controlled trial in 118 people with type-2 diabetes found that 1000 mg curcumin + 10 mg piperine/d led to significant reduction in serum total cholesterol, non-HDL-C and lipoprotein (a).

Depression and Pain

- Multiple studies suggest a link between inflammation, depression and pain.
- Danish study (>73,000 adults) showed that those with the highest levels of CRP protein (marker of inflammation) were twice as likely to have psychological distress and depression than those with normal levels.

Turmeric for Depression?

- Mini meta-analysis of 6 studies found curcumin reduced depression symptoms, particularly in middle-aged patients when given at higher doses for longer periods of time.
- Authors concluded, “there is supporting evidence that curcumin administration reduces depressive symptoms in patients with major depression.”
- Is it due to systemic reduction in inflammation?
Absorption and Safety Issues

- Turmeric/curcumin not well absorbed into bloodstream from GI tract and what is absorbed is quickly metabolized and eliminated from the body.
- Best to take turmeric/curcumin 2-3 times per day, rather than once per day, for best effects.
- Preparations bound to phosphatidylcholine (Meriva) or piperine, alkaloid from black pepper, are optimal forms for pain (3-5 mg piperine per dose).
- Dose 1000-1500 mg/d standardized extract (95% curcumin) used in most of the trials.

Ginger
(Zingiber officinale)

- Meta-analysis comparing ginger with placebo in OA patients found "Ginger was modestly efficacious and reasonably safe for treatment of osteoarthritis."
- Studies show beneficial effect on lipids/glucose.
- 1-2 grams/d dried rhizome has not been associated with adverse effects.
- Doses higher than 4 grams per day can have a negative impact on blood clotting.

There are many ways to incorporate more turmeric into the daily diet as seen in my tips to the left.
There are many recipes for golden milk – this is the one we use the most at my home.
Cannabis sativa; C. indica

• Cannabis used to treat pain thousands of years.
• Major psychotropic component is Δ9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), one of 120 naturally occurring phytocannabinoids.
• Cannabidiol (CBD) is found in marijuana and hemp. Does not produce euphoric effects but has antipsychotic, anxiolytic, anti-seizure, analgesic, and anti-inflammatory properties.

• Systematic review and meta-analysis of cannabinoids: 28 RCTs (2454 patients) with chronic pain found that, compared with placebo, cannabinoids associated with greater reduction in pain.
• Dosing remains confusing: most studies using CBD used 100-300 mg per day, far greater than what is commonly used.


Back Pain

• Lower back pain highly disruptive, second leading cause of disability.
• It is acute if less than six weeks and chronic if persists > three months.
• Pain can be severe, making walking, standing and traveling long distances difficult, even though physical activity is effective for improving and preventing back pain.
• Back pain is frequently associated with anxiety, depression and irritability.
• Second major cause of short-term workplace absences; estimated 149 million days of work per year lost due to low back pain.


Clinical Practice Guidelines Back Pain

• American College of Physicians guideline is to provide treatment guidance based on the efficacy, comparative effectiveness, and safety of noninvasive pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic treatments for acute (<4 weeks), subacute (4 to 12 weeks), and chronic (>12 weeks) low back pain in primary care.
• Recommendations are on following slides.

Acute or Subacute Low Back Pain: Guidance

• Given that most patients with acute or subacute low back pain improve over time regardless of treatment, clinicians and patients should select non-pharmacologic treatment with superficial heat, massage, acupuncture, or spinal manipulation.

• If pharmacologic treatment is desired, clinicians and patients should select NSAID or skeletal muscle relaxants (Grade: strong recommendation)

Spinal Manipulation for Acute Back Pain

• 15 RCTS found spinal manipulation resulted in an improvement in pain of about 10 points on a 100-point scale.
• 12 RCTS found spinal manipulation resulted in improvements in function.


Chronic Low Back Pain Guidance

• Clinicians and patients should initially select non-pharmacologic treatment with exercise, multidisciplinary rehabilitation, acupuncture, mindfulness-based stress reduction, tai chi, yoga, progressive relaxation, electromyography biofeedback, cognitive behavioral therapy, or spinal manipulation (Grade: strong recommendation)

Headaches

• Migraines/headaches significant source of pain, ~ 13% of US population.
• Burden of headache is highest in women ages 18-44, where 3-month prevalence of migraine or severe headache is roughly 26%. Head pain is the third leading cause for emergency room visits.
• Surveys show 70% of those with migraines say headaches have caused problems in relationships, 59% have missed family and social events and 51% report that migraines cut their work and school productivity in half.

Acupuncture for Migraine

- Cochrane review 22 trials (n=4985) concluded that evidence suggests adding acupuncture to symptomatic treatment of attacks reduces frequency of headaches. Trials also suggest that acupuncture may be at least similarly effective as treatment with prophylactic drugs.
- “Acupuncture can be considered a treatment option for patients willing to undergo this treatment.”


Magnesium for Migraines

- Studies show migraineurs have low brain Mg during migraine attacks and may have systemic Mg deficiency.
- Canadian Headache Society: strong recommendation for prophylaxis with 600 mg magnesium citrate.
- Diarrhea most common side effect (mag glycinate and citrate less GI complaints than oxide). Caution in those with poor renal function.


Coenzyme Q10 for Migraines

- CHS guidelines gave a strong recommendation for prophylaxis of migraine: 300 mg/d.
- The AAN/AHS gave a Level C recommendation, stating it is possibly effective and may be considered for migraine prevention.


Riboflavin for Migraines

- CHS guidelines gave strong recommendation for benefit, and minimal side effects.
- AAN/AHS give riboflavin Level B recommendation, probably effective and should be considered for migraine prevention. 200 mg BID
- Deficiency: increases light sensitivity

Butterbur Extract for Migraines (*Petasites hybridus*)

- Butterbur Level A recommendation for migraine prevention in adults from the AAN and AHS.
- CHS gave strong recommendation for migraine prophylaxis: 75 mg twice daily.
- **Petadolex** is brand used in clinical trials.


Temporomandibular Disorder

- Term used to group conditions in the masticatory muscles and the temporomandibular joint (TMJ), impaired movement capacity of the mandible, and TMJ symptoms such as clicking, grating and locking of the jaw.
- Most common cause of chronic orofacial pain.


TMD: Significant Cause of Pain

- Impacts 5-12% of the population.
- **Second** most common musculoskeletal condition (after chronic low back pain) resulting in pain and disability.
- Common TMD include arthralgia, myalgia, local myalgia, myofascial pain, myofascial pain with referral, degenerative joint disease, subluxation, and headache.


TMP Pain Screening Tool

- For clinical use, responses from the screener can be used as part of the diagnostic process for a pain-related TMD diagnosis.
- Sensitivity 99.1% for both short (3 questions) and long questionnaire (6 questions): specificity was 95.98%.
- Radiographic imaging confirms TMD diagnosis.
- Patients are interested in treatment.

**Care Option**

- Ice or heat applications
- Soft foods when pain acute
- Self-care exercises
- Physical therapy
- Splint
- Anti-inflammatory diet
- Topical analgesics (e.g., capsaicin)
- Acupuncture

**Splint Versus Self-Exercise**

- 52 people with anterior disc displacement without reduction randomly assigned to **splint** or a joint mobilization **self-exercise** treatment group.
- Warm-up, small mouth-opening and closing movements several times. Then, individual placed fingertips on edge of mandibular anterior teeth and slowly pulled the mandible down until pain occurred on the TMJ-affected side. 3 cycles of 30 seconds each were done 4 times per day.
- Participants in the **splint group** wore a maxillary stabilization appliance while sleeping at night. Splint was adjusted to ensure occlusal contact of all mandibular teeth in centric relation and mandibular canine guidance in eccentric movement.
- All outcome variables significantly improved after 8 weeks of treatment in both groups (mouth opening range with and without pain, maximum daily pain intensity, limitation of daily functions. In particular, the mouth opening range increased more in the exercise group than in the splint group.


**Acupuncture and Dry Needling**

- Small studies that used dry needling or acupuncture of the lateral pterygoid and posterior, periarticular connective tissue, masseter and temporalis muscles have shown improvements in pain and disability in patients with TMD.


**Mood, Sleep and Pain**

- Study of 273,952 individuals/47 countries found depression significantly associated with severe pain (odds ratio 3.93 (95% CI 3.54-4.37).
- High prevalence of concomitant pain and sleep disturbance and there is a bidirectional and reciprocal relationship.
- Pain can impair sleep but research also shows that insomnia and short sleep duration increases the risk for developing chronic pain.
- Study in healthy young women found after just two nights of fragmented sleep in an experimental setting, increased pain sensitivity in both superficial and deep tissues.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- CBT has emerged as a recommended first-line therapy for insomnia. Scale can be an issue. Digital CBT has been shown to be effective for improving sleep, as well as mental health and well-being.
- CBT-I typically consists of:
  - Psychoeducation about sleep and insomnia
  - Stimulus control
  - Sleep restriction
  - Sleep hygiene
  - Relaxation training
  - Cognitive therapy
- Sleepio, CBT-I Coach (free)


Melatonin

- Melatonin maintains sleep-wake cycle, acts as an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, pain reliever, and mood regulator, making it ideal for many with chronic pain.
- A systematic review of 19 studies found that melatonin significantly decreases the pain intensity, as evidenced by pain scores, regardless of the type of pain.
- Plays important role in gastrointestinal physiology: regulation of gastrointestinal motility, local anti-inflammatory reaction and moderation of visceral sensation. Studies show it can improve symptoms and quality of life in people living with IBS.


Esteban-Zubero E, et al. Melatonin’s role as a s-adjunct treatment in colonic disease: A review. Lyp 6:6 2017 Feb 1;70:72-81

Melatonin Sleep and Safety

- Meta-analysis of 12 randomized, placebo-controlled trials found convincing evidence that melatonin reduced sleep onset latency (the time it takes to fall asleep) in primary insomnia (p = 0.002) and delayed sleep phase syndrome (when it takes 2 or more hours to fall asleep past conventional bedtime) (p < 0.0001).
- Studies have failed to show any serious adverse effects with melatonin, even at extreme doses (100 mg) in adults. Taking melatonin doesn’t suppress the endogenous production of melatonin and there is no rebound insomnia when it is discontinued. Dose generally 3 mg 2 hours before bed.


California Poppy

(Eschscholzia californica)

- Official state flower California. Native Americans used as food and medicine for millennia.
- Aerial plant used to relieve tooth pain, headache, and promote sleep.
- Basic science shows it acts on GABA-A receptors in the brain, similar to a benzodiazepine, but without habit-forming tendency of the drug. Has anxiolytic, analgesic, sedative activity.

California Poppy

- European Union monograph recognizes traditional use for relief of mild symptoms of mental stress and to aid sleep.
- It also discusses research that indicates that a “standardized extract of California poppy can be used in the management of chronic pain and as a hypnotic-mild-sedative for the management of pain-related insomnia.”
- Dose: 300-600 mg 1-2 times per day.

Mindfulness Meditation

- Mindfulness meditation excellent as it can decrease pain intensity and stress levels.
- Long-time meditators have greater activation of areas responsible for sustaining attention, processing empathy, integrating emotion and cognition.
- Review of 47 trials found meditation improves:
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Pain

Mindfulness Meditation Resources

- Obviously a local class is the very best option. But there are books, CDs and yes, there are apps……
  - Insight Timer – ~4,000 guided meditations from more than 1,000 teachers (self-compassion, nature, stress, podcasts and more). More than 750 meditation music tracks. Free.
  - Headspace – very good for beginners with 10 minute meditations. Free.
  - The Mindfulness App – nice 5 days guided meditation program to get you started. Can be personalized and integrated into other health apps. Free.
  - Aura – multiple teachers, from 3-10 minute daily meditations. Customizable. #1 new app on Apple. $29 for 6 months.

Meaning and Purpose

- What truly gives a person a sense of meaning and purpose in life?
- How can someone discover her life purpose to focus on the essence of who she is? Her being.
- How can one live from a “deep place” despite his or her pain?
- So important to explore… it is often the key to less suffering…. 