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Post congrès

Sensibilisation centrale de la douleur en pratique clinique : diagnostic différentiel et identification des facteurs de causalité afin de fournir un traitement adapté



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Central sensitization pain in clinical practice: differential diagnosis and identifying causal factors to provide tailored treatment

Jo Nijs¹⁻³

¹ Pain in Motion International Research Group, www.paininmotion.be

² Department of Physiotherapy, Human Physiology and Anatomy, Faculty of Physical Education & Physiotherapy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

³ Department of Physical Medicine and Physiotherapy, University Hospital Brussels, Belgium twitter: @PaininMotion; facebook: www.facebook.com/PainInMotion

Learning objectives :

At the completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Apply evidence-based guidelines for chronic pain management to physical therapy practice;
2. Classify pain patients as having nociceptive, neuropathic or central sensitization pain;
3. Devise an effective physical therapy program to remediate pain that engages the patient and considers cognitive/affective/emotive aspects of the pain experience.

Program

- Chronic pain: a matter of maladaptive changes in the mind, body & brain
- Classification of nociceptive, neuropathic and central sensitization pain in physiotherapy practice
- Skills training classification of pain types in physiotherapy practice
- Identifying causal factors to tailor treatment
- Skills training identifying causal factors to provide tailored treatment



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Content :

Increasing evidence supports a cardinal role for physiotherapists in the treatment of chronic pain. Physiotherapists combine the unique skills for targeting the chronic pain patient's mind, body and brain concomitantly¹⁻⁵. Yet physical therapists are often unaware of their ability to treat complex patients with chronic pain. Therefore, the course aims at learning physical therapists to apply evidence-based guidelines for chronic pain management.

Chronic pain represents a biopsychosocial problem, with maladaptive changes in the mind, body and brain. Education⁶, exercise therapy⁷ and physical activity interventions are effective treatments for various chronic pain disorders, including fibromyalgia, chronic neck pain⁸, osteoarthritis^{1,9}, rheumatoid arthritis and chronic low back pain². Although the clinical benefits of physiotherapy in these populations are well established (i.e. evidence based), clinicians struggle applying science in daily practice.

One of the reasons why clinicians experience difficulties in applying evidence in practice, is that they are unaware of their capacity to differentiate between various pain types. Indeed, a prerequisite for providing appropriate treatment is classifying pain patients as having either nociceptive, neuropathic or central sensitization pain. Course participants will learn how physical therapists can classify their pain patients without relying on expensive or complex examinations. They will learn using a clinical algorithm for differentiating nociceptive from neuropathic and central sensitization pain in daily practice^{10,11}. This will allow them to provide individually-tailored physical therapy, targeting mind, body and brain.

At the mind level, reductions in maladaptive pain cognitions, especially pain catastrophizing and fear-avoidance beliefs, as well as increased pain self-efficacy beliefs, have been established as key contributors to positive outcome in exercise therapy programs for chronic pain. Such maladaptive cognitive factors are typically addressed in comprehensive exercise therapy programs that include not only exercise but also pain neuroscience education, stress management, and activity self-management.



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At the brain level, it is crucial to consider the concept of pain mechanisms, including aspects like central sensitization and dysfunctional endogenous analgesia in response to exercise as seen in some chronic pain populations. Hence, in patients with chronic pain and central sensitization it seems rational to target therapies at the brain rather than muscles, joints or cardiovascular system. More precisely, modern pain neuroscience calls for treatment strategies aiming at decreasing the sensitivity of the central nervous system (i.e. desensitizing therapies). An increasing number of studies support the use of physical therapy interventions like graded activity and graded exercise therapy, as desensitizing therapies for patients with chronic pain.

Physiotherapists combine the unique skills for targeting the chronic pain patient's mind, body and brain concomitantly. A prerequisite for providing appropriate treatment is classifying pain patients as having either nociceptive, neuropathic or central sensitization pain. Once the chronic pain patients are correctly classified, physiotherapy can include interventions like counselling, activity self-management, and graded exercise therapy tailored to the patient's preferences, needs, pain cognitions, musculoskeletal and central nervous system dysfunctions. A broad biopsychosocial view is required for applying effective physiotherapy for patients with chronic pain, and can be provided in primary, secondary or tertiary care. This accounts for physiotherapists working in the field of musculoskeletal pain, neurology, pediatrics, internal medicine and geriatrics.

Educational modes:

The course content will be delivered through a mixture of methods to optimize multi-faceted knowledge transfer, designed to address local barriers to knowledge translation, in line with current best-evidence approach in improving evidence-based practice / clinical practice guideline uptake among physiotherapists^{1 2}, including:

- interactive lectures
- demonstrations
- didactic sessions
- practical skills training - illustrations
- discussion and feedback sessions addressing clinical reasoning skills - case studies



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