

### Contents

<u>Definition</u>	2
<u>Pain management e-learning</u>	2
<u>National guidance</u>	4
<u>Patient support</u>	4
<u>Further resources</u>	5
<u>External websites</u>	6
<u>References</u>	6

### Definition

Pain has been defined as ‘an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage’.<sup>1</sup>

The experience of pain is a complex and personal one and is affected by a combination of physical, physiological, pathological, emotional, psychological, cognitive, environmental and social factors.<sup>2</sup>

[Return to contents](#)

### Pain management e-learning

We recommend that you work through one of the following e-learning programmes on pain management if you have not already done so.

<p>Northern Ireland Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development (NICPLD) <a href="#">Pain management e-learning programme via CPPE's website</a></p>	<p>e-learning for healthcare's e-PAIN programme accessed via CPPE's website under <a href="#">e-learning for healthcare learning modules</a></p>
<p>Contains three modules:</p> <p><b>Module 1 – Pain</b></p> <p><u>Aim</u> To provide healthcare professionals with an overview of pain and an understanding of the different methods used when assessing pain.</p> <p><u>Learning outcomes</u> Following completion of this course, you should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>differentiate between the different types of pain and give examples of each</li> <li>describe the basic anatomy of nerves and the pathophysiology of pain</li> <li>understand the importance of assessing pain to inform the prescribing/supply of appropriate therapy</li> <li>appreciate the different methods used to assess pain (including assessing pain in those with cognitive impairment), using different pain assessment tools.</li> </ul> <p><b>Module 2 – Management</b></p> <p><u>Aim</u> To provide healthcare professionals with the knowledge to treat pain effectively.</p> <p><u>Learning outcomes</u> Having completed this course, you should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>outline the frameworks used in pain management</li> </ul>	<p>Contains 12 modules:</p> <p><b>Module 1 – Introducing pain management</b> Provides an overview and introduction for non-specialists to the topic of pain management.</p> <p><b>Module 2 – Acute pain</b> Takes a more detailed look at acute pain. The first part of the module, <i>Introduction</i>, includes content to enable users to gain knowledge of the assessment and management of acute pain. The second section, <i>Acute pain techniques</i>, provides further detail on the treatment methods for acute pain.</p> <p><b>Module 3 – Pain as a long-term condition</b> For most people, their first experience of pain is often short-term following injury (see Module 2). However, many people live with persisting pain that impacts on both their physical function and emotional wellbeing. This module explores persisting or chronic pain and what can be done to help people learn self-management skills. People often need support to rebuild their lives in a context where medicines and therapies may not provide satisfactory pain relief. Many argue that persisting pain should be viewed and given the same status as any long-term condition.</p> <p><b>Module 4 – Treatments and therapies</b> This module looks at the treatments and therapies available for the treatment of pain, both pharmacological and non-pharmacological.</p>

- describe the three main types of analgesics used for the pharmacological management of nociceptive pain
- explain the use of adjuvant pain-relieving medicines
- discuss non-pharmacological approaches to pain
- interpret conversion charts when switching opioids
- list the available treatment options for neuropathic pain
- detail measures that can be taken to minimise the misuse of pain-relieving medicines.

**Module 3 – Specific patient groups**

Aim

To provide healthcare professionals with the knowledge to manage pain effectively in specific patient groups.

Learning outcomes

Having completed this course, you should be able to:

- list the physiological differences in infants and older people in relation to pain
- describe the analgesic options in pregnancy and breastfeeding
- explain the World Health Organization’s (WHO) *Pain Ladder*
- detail the concept of total pain in [Cancer](#), ie, social issues, direct physical pain, spiritual, psychological and emotional issues
- define background and breakthrough pain
- understand the priorities when providing [End of life care](#).

**Module 5 – Pain conditions around the body**

Examines instances of chronic pain not dealt with in Module 7 – Neuropathic Pain, including headache, pelvic pain visceral pain and chronic regional pain syndrome.

**Module 6 – Musculoskeletal pain**

Covers a range of subjects matters ranging from osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, stratified care for low back pain, sciatica, inflammatory arthritis and supporting people to stay at work or those returning to work.

**Module 7 – Neuropathic pain**

Deals with the diagnosis and evaluation of neuropathic pain, and then looks at various instances of neuropathic pain and practical issues with the use of neuropathic pain medicines.

**Module 8 – Pain in children**

*‘Pain in children is different’* – a bold title to the first session of this module, which we hope will raise awareness of developmental, family, therapeutic and organisational issues that all need to be addressed to better manage pain in children.

**Module 9 – Pain in older people**

**Module 10 – Special populations**

Covers the effect of pain in a number of special populations. Section one includes pain in pregnancy, pain in sickle cell disease, and dealing with pain in those suffering drug addiction or dependency issues. Section two covers pain in older people.

**Module 11 – Cancer pain**

Examines pain in cancer patients and looks at the causes and aetiology of that pain and its management via both pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies. The module concludes with a look at managing pain in cancer survivors.

**Module 12 – Basic science**

Covers the physiological and anatomical aspects of pain and pain management and makes use of a number of existing sessions drawn from the

	award-winning elearning for healthcare <i>Anaesthesia</i> programme.
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[Return to contents](#)

### National guidance

The following collaborative development between the British Pain Society and the British Geriatrics Society highlights the problems in assessing and managing pain in an ever-increasing older population. It provides a range of tools that demonstrate good validity and reliability for clinical practice in assessing pain in older people. Access the *Age and Ageing* article here: [The Assessment of Pain in Older People: UK National Guidelines](#).<sup>3</sup>

The [Guidance on the management of pain in older people](#) document, published as a 'supplement of Age and Ageing, reviews the epidemiology and management of pain in older people via a literature review of published research. The aim of this document is to inform health professionals in any care setting who work with older adults on best practice for the management of pain and to identify where there are gaps in the evidence that require further research'.<sup>4</sup>

### National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) resources

NICE Guidance on chronic pain [NG193] was published in April 2021: [Chronic pain \(primary and secondary\) in over 16s: assessment of all chronic pain and management of chronic primary pain](#).<sup>5</sup>

NICE provides clinical knowledge summaries (CKS) which look at pain, these include:

- [Analgesia – mild-to-moderate pain](#)
- [Palliative cancer care – pain](#)
- [Neuropathic pain – drug treatment](#)
- [Chronic pain](#)

### Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) guidance

SIGN offer the following guidance: [Management of chronic pain \[SIGN 136\]](#). This provides recommendations based on current evidence for best practice in the assessment and management, in non-specialist settings, of adults with chronic non-malignant pain, which is defined for the purposes of this guideline as pain that has been present for more than 12 weeks.<sup>6</sup>

[Return to contents](#)

### Patient support

[Pain Concern](#) is a charity working to support and inform people with pain and those who care for them, whether family, friends or healthcare professionals. They provide support on the phone, online or in person, and have some great tools available to help you manage pain.

The [British Pain Society](#) is an alliance of professionals advancing the understanding and management of pain for the benefit of patients. They provide information and support on their [People living with pain](#) page, including information on pain management programmes.

The NHS has pages dedicated to

- [How to get NHS help for your pain](#)
- [Ways to manage chronic pain](#)
- [10 ways to reduce pain](#)

Others:

- [The Pain Toolkit](#)
- [ESCAPE-pain](#) 'is a rehabilitation programme for people with chronic joint pain of the knees and/or hips, that integrates educational self-management and coping strategies with an exercise regimen individualised for each participant'.

[Return to contents](#)

### Further resources

CPPE offers a collection of resources on the [Pain](#) learning gateway.

### Recognising and assessing pain

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, an independent social change organisation working to solve UK poverty, has produced a report, ***Pain management for older people with learning difficulties and dementia***, to help care staff, GPs and carers to recognise and treat pain in people who have a learning difficulty and dementia.

The Royal College of Anaesthetists' Faculty of Pain Medicine 'is the professional body responsible for the training, assessment, practice and continuing professional development of specialist medical practitioners in the management of pain in the UK. It supports a multi-disciplinary approach to pain management informed by evidence-based practice and research'.<sup>7</sup> They offer guidance on how to take a pain history via [Patient assessment](#) and have produced [Conducting quality consultations in pain medicine](#) to help optimise specialist pain consultations.

### Management of pain

PrescQIPP offers guidance on numerous aspects of pain including neuropathic pain, chronic pain and reducing opioid prescribing in chronic pain. Access to all their pain resources requires registration and is available [here](#).

NICE guidance:

- [Neuropathic pain in adults: pharmacological management in non-specialist settings \[CG173\]](#)

[The International Association for the Study of Pain](#) provides current research undertaken in the field of pain management.

Faculty of Pain Medicine:

- [Clinical use of Opioids](#)

### National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) alert

The [Archived NPSA Alert – Reducing dosing errors with opioid medicines 2008](#) offers recommendations on what should happen when opioid medicines are prescribed, dispensed or administered.

[Return to contents](#)

### External websites

CPPE is not responsible for the content of any non-CPPE websites mentioned on this page or for the accuracy of any information to be found there.

All web links were accessed in August 2023.

[Return to contents](#)

### References

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[Return to contents](#)

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