



THE
AUSTRALIAN
PAIN SOCIETY

www.apsoc.org.au

PO Box 637
North Sydney NSW 2059

T: 02 9016 4343

E: aps@apsoc.org.au

W: www.apsoc.org.au

Twitter: @AusPainSoc

MEDIA RELEASE

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AVOID PAIN WORSENING WITH MORPHINE BY USING OTHER EFFECTIVE PAIN-COPING STRATEGIES

Recent research has hit the headlines suggesting that just a few days of morphine immediately after a nerve injury (at least in rats) results in a much longer pain duration with greater severity.

President of the Australian Pain Society (APS), Dr Geoffrey Speldewinde, says this adds to the growing scientific evidence that whilst morphine is excellent for pain relief immediately after injuries and surgery, this may well come at considerable cost for the individual later on in their recovery. This research may be uncovering some of the reasons for the escalating and huge numbers of Australians dying every year through overdoses of prescribed opiates.

There are more than 5 million Australians living daily with chronic pain, suffering varying degrees of disability. For many, their best option of securing a better and more productive quality of life may be through combined and coordinated multidisciplinary health care aiming to develop other and proven pain-coping strategies than just resorting to medications especially as real risks of doing so are being revealed by this and numerous other studies.

The evidence that there are MANY non-pharmacological options that are just as good, if not better than, in particular opiate medications to help cope with persistent pain is now overwhelming.

Dr Speldewinde went on to say "There is now overwhelming evidence that there are many forms of physical, psychological, educational, and minimally-invasive procedures that can be made available to all Australians living with persistent pain and who seek help. Clearly there is an increasing need for people with a wide range of difficult pain conditions across all age groups living with a range of disabilities to be able to access affordable and coordinated multidisciplinary services."

He went on to say: "The physical and psychological impacts that can arise from living with chronic pain result all too easily in dependency on just using medications as the main coping strategy. Significantly, the ability to, and quality of, work can be dramatically reduced by an excessive reliance on medications as the only coping strategy, especially as we are now identifying a large range of hither-to under-recognised side-effects."

"20% of Australians are living with a range of disturbing pain conditions and any measures that will facilitate those with chronic pain becoming aware of evidence-guided pain management treatments will lead to timelier, more accurate and clinically effective pain diagnoses, and hence improved non-pharmacological pain coping strategies."

The Australian Pain Society (APS) is Australia's leading national forum of a wide range of university-trained science-based health professionals (including doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologists and researchers) trained in the recognition, research, management and advocacy around all aspects of pain in Australia. The Australian Pain Society is well positioned and well resourced to provide support, education, and advocacy for patients and clinicians.

For more detailed information please refer to our webpage: <https://www.apsoc.org.au>

For further comment, information or photos, please call or email:

NAME: Tracy Hallen at the APS Secretariat

CONTACT DETAILS: T: 02 9016 4343
E: aps@apsoc.org.au