

## Editor's Note

This edition has our President's report from the AGM earlier this year. Also we have an interesting article by Zhen Zheng about acupuncture and persisting pain, accompanied by an impressive list of references.

Happy reading,

**Will Howard**

Newsletter Editor

## Australian Pain Society President's Report to AGM 2009-2010



Firstly, I would like to communicate to all members that our society is very strong, vibrant and active across multiple areas. Our current membership is approximately 730 persons, we are attracting increasing

numbers to our annual scientific meetings, and we are expanding our PhD scholarship programs. The Australian Pain Society (APS) is on a very solid financial footing with almost 1 million dollars in capital reserves. We are undertaking an increasing number of activities, educational statements and publications; our interface with other professional bodies, consumers and relevant industry is also ever growing.

In terms of operational management and governance, we have recently employed a new part-time administrative assistant (Tracy Hallen), who is completely dedicated to APS business matters and we have expanded our committee structure to include a new Relationships and Communication sub-committee in order to better deal with other organisations from all sectors and to better communicate with members and our other constituents. Indeed at the last face-to-face Directors

meeting just preceding the annual scientific meeting in March, it was agreed to add a new consumer section to our website, with some frequently asked questions, educational information on pain, and a directory of pain management services. Our newsletter, now in electronic format, has increased in frequency to better inform our members of the numerous activities and issues that the APS is dealing with. As you are aware, we have also changed our membership fee structure to a tiered, income-based system in order to improve affordability for our less financial members and changed our billing cycle from the financial year to the calendar year.

Regarding operational activities over the past 12 months, I would just like to briefly mention two major projects that have consumed considerable time and energy from the Board, namely, the Waiting in Pain initiative and the National Pain Summit. The Waiting in Pain project, under the supervision of Victorian Director, Malcolm Hogg, has now completed all data collection and an interim report was released at the National Pain Summit held in Canberra on March 11th 2010. Some 63 multidisciplinary pain management services were reviewed and a broad variety of information was collected (staffing, treatments offered including type(s) of multidisciplinary programs, funding sources, and of course, wait times for access to the service). We will use this information to update the facility directory of the APS, publish the results in a peer-reviewed journal, and write a more comprehensive report within the next 12 months. This initiative has required a tremendous

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amount of work and Dr Hogg is to be congratulated on seeing this important project to its completion.

The National Pain Summit represents one of the largest and perhaps most strategic projects to be commenced over the past 12 months. As you are aware, the APS has been one of the lead organisations in contributing to the National Pain Summit, with four Directors included on the current steering committee (myself, Tim Semple, Michael Deen, Michael Jennings) and many other APS members being involved in working parties. The original draft strategy was available for some months ([www.painsummit.org.au](http://www.painsummit.org.au)) and has now (March 2010) received feedback from over 130 organisations as well as several individual submissions. During the summit the areas of highest priority were agreed on. The Board has tried to keep the membership fully informed of these developments and there have been regular articles in our newsletter on this topic. Plans are now underway to take the next vital step and it has been agreed that a National Body needs to be commissioned in order to ensure that the strategy is incorporated into health reforms and to ensure that pain is listed as a priority area for funding and future development. The Board strongly believes that this strategy may potentially be the single most important initiative of the APS over recent years and could directly impact on the service delivery of all pain management treatments. Quite simply the APS cannot afford to miss this important opportunity.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank the Board and office bearers of the society as well as our very capable secretariat at DC Conferences. As you are aware, our Board and office bearers are all honorary appointments and they work exceptionally hard to promote the APS and its activities. It takes an enormous amount of time and energy to meet the ever-expanding organisational requirements of the APS and this time is freely given by all. The sixteen key individuals often hold multiple positions and responsibilities within our society and we should sincerely thank them for their untiring efforts. DC Conferences, our secretariat, capably led by Dianna Crebbin are simply indispensable. Dianna has been involved with the APS for much longer than most of our current members and has been instrumental in seeing our society grow from very humble beginnings to its present multifaceted organisational structure. The DC team makes sure that all of our needs are met,

provide our key public interface, ensure our accounts are in order, and deliver all of the other core operational ingredients necessary for our continued success. We simply could not do without them.

**Stephen Gibson**

President, Australian Pain Society

## REMINDER:

Topical Session Submissions for the 2011 Conference in Darwin due **1 OCTOBER 2010** via the APS website.

Please start planning your sessions now. These usually involve a chair and three presenters.

## | Acupuncture and Brain Image

**Dr Zhen Zheng, Senior Lecturer, RMIT University**

28 July 2010

At this year's Australian Pain Society conference, we were fascinated by the research that Irene Tracey presented to us on how pain impacted on our brain and how our brain interpreted pain. In her presentation, Irene also mentioned some acupuncture studies in relation to brain imaging. Over the past 10 years, brain imaging technology has been extensively used to study the effect of acupuncture on experimental pain and clinic pain. A PubMed search identifies more than 100 publications in this area.

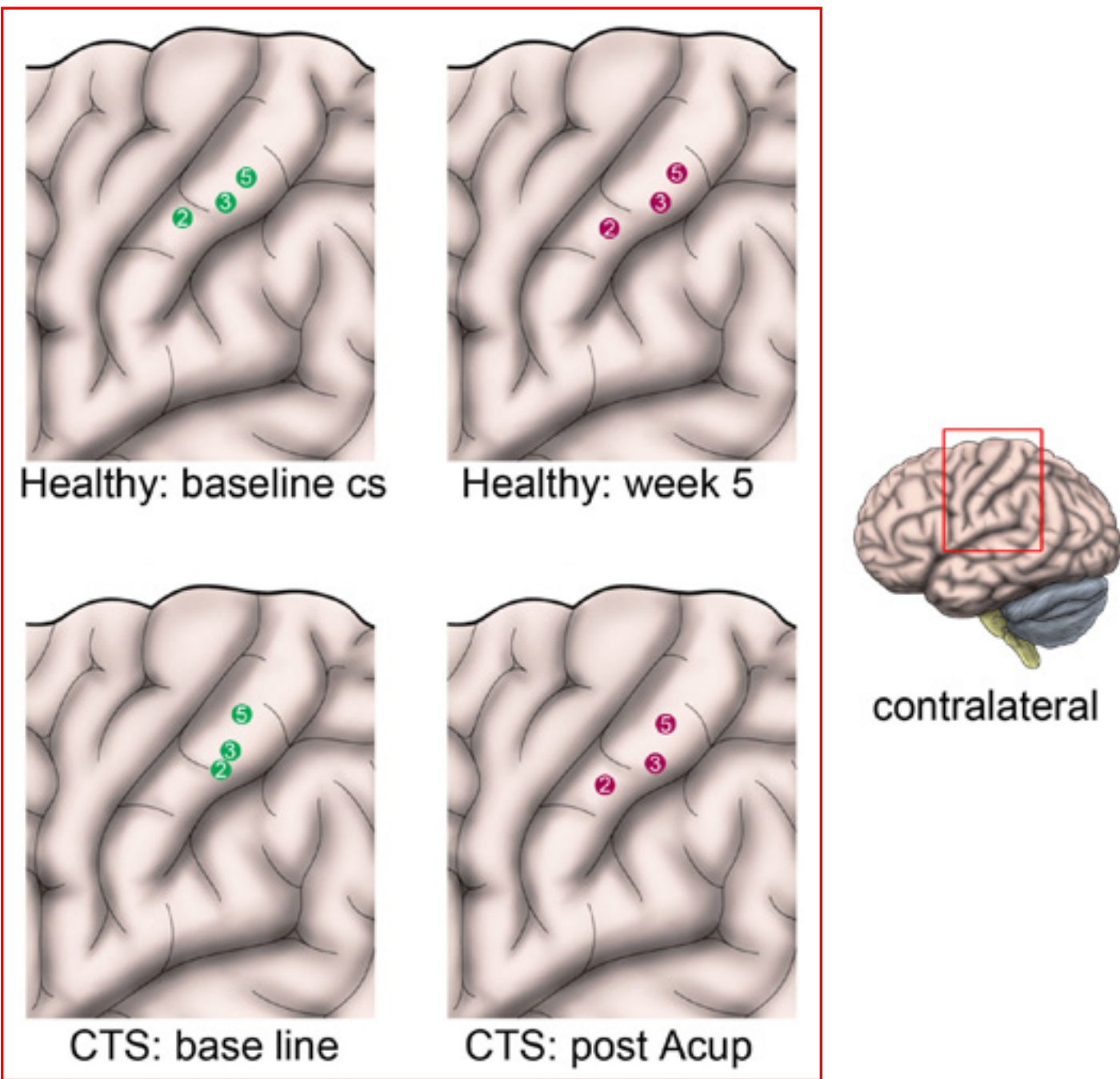
In general, the results show that real acupuncture differs from sham acupuncture. When compared with sham acupuncture, most studies show that real acupuncture activates the brain regions related to pain experience and modulation, such as the secondary somatosensory cortex, periaqueductal gray, thalamus and insular regions (1-3) and deactivates the limbic system, such as the amygdala and hippocampus (4-5).

The following two studies on chronic pain patients are of particular interest.

### Acupuncture and cortical plasticity

In the paper published by Napadow et al in Human Brain Mapping in 2007 (6), the researchers compared the response of the somatosensory cortex of patients suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome (CPT, n = 8) with those of healthy humans (n = 8) to stimulation delivered to three digits - D2 and D3 (median nerve territory) and D5 (ulnar nerve territory). The fMRI scans were

conducted before and after 13 sessions of electrical acupuncture for the CPT patients and twice for the healthy subjects about 45 days apart. They found that the cortical representation of stimulation to D2 and D3 was clearly separated in healthy subjects; in contrast, in CPT patients it was merged and inseparable. More importantly, after acupuncture, cortical representation of stimulation to D2 and D3 in the CPT patients became separated as occurs in healthy humans. This change was correlated with decreased paresthesias reported by CTS patients.



A drawing of the picture from Napadow, V., et al., Hum Brain Mapp, 2007. 28(3): p. 159-71 (2,3 and 5 represents Digits 2, 3, and 5. The upper panel illustrates the brain activities to stimuli applied to the three digits in health controls before and after acupuncture; the middle panel the brain activities to stimuli applied to CTS patients before and after acupuncture; and the lower panel the brain region being scanned)

## Acupuncture and binding potential of opioid receptors in human brain

A paper by Harris et al published in *Neuroimage* in 2009 aimed to examine the impact of acupuncture on the binding potentials (BP) of  $\mu$ -opioid receptors (MORs) (7). Previous animal and human studies have shown that acupuncture enhances the release of endogenous opioid peptides (8).

In this randomised, patient-assessor blinded study, 20 fibromyalgia patients received 8 sessions of real (RA) or sham acupuncture (SA). Positron emission tomography (PET) was performed during the 1st and 9th acupuncture treatments allowing the researchers to compare the immediate and long-lasting effect of acupuncture. They found that real acupuncture increased BP of MORs at both the immediate and longterm timepoints in the cingulate, caudate, and amygdala regions whereas sham acupuncture had little effect on BP of MORs. The researchers also found that increased BP was correlated with larger pain reduction. (Previously the same research group found that the BP of MORs were reduced in fibromyalgia patients(9), perhaps explaining the poor effect of opioid medications on this group of patients.)

## Can acupuncture reduce opioid medication usage by chronic pain patients?

Harris et al 2009 is one of the first studies demonstrating the effect of acupuncture on the opioid-mediated endogenous pain modulation system in chronic pain patients. Its implication is yet to be explored. For instance, would a few sessions of acupuncture increase the efficacy of opioid medications in chronic pain, thus allowing reduced consumption of these drugs? Previous animal studies reported a synergistic effect of these two types of interventions (10) and clinical trials of post-operative studies consistently reported that electroacupuncture reduced the need for opioid medication by up to 75% (11-13). A recent pilot study in Australia also reported that electroacupuncture reduced opioid medication usage by chronic pain patients by up to 64% (14).

Currently, a large randomised sham acupuncture controlled trial is being carried out in Victoria to further assess the role of acupuncture on reduction of opioid

medication for chronic pain, a challenging problem that has few solutions. This trial is funded by a NHMRC project grant. If you want to know more about this trial please contact Dr Zhen Zheng, on 03 9925 7167 or email [zhen.zheng@rmit.edu.au](mailto:zhen.zheng@rmit.edu.au)

### References

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## Biography

**Zhen Zheng,  
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Zhen is a senior lecturer at the Division of Chinese Medicine, School of Health Sciences, RMIT University. She specialises in acupuncture clinical research in pain management and neurophysiology of acupuncture analgesia. She has been the Editor-in-Chief of the *Australian Journal of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine* since 2006.

## Calendar of Events

### OFFICIAL SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM OF THE 13TH WORLD CONGRESS ON PAIN

**Moving the pain education agenda forward:  
Innovative models  
26-27 August 2010**  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
[www.bloomberg.nursing.utoronto.ca/  
PainSymposium](http://www.bloomberg.nursing.utoronto.ca/PainSymposium)

### 2ND INTERNATIONAL COURSE ON PAIN MEDICINE

**27-29 August 2010**  
Montreal, Canada  
[www.ICPM.net](http://www.ICPM.net)

### 13TH WORLD CONGRESS ON PAIN

**Current Concepts in Urogenital Pain  
29 August - 2 September 2010**  
Palais des congrès de Montréal,  
Montréal, Québec, Canada  
[www.iasp-pain.org/Montreal](http://www.iasp-pain.org/Montreal)

### INTERNATIONAL PAIN SUMMIT

**3 September 2010**  
Palais des congrès de Montréal,  
Montréal, Québec, Canada  
[www.iasp-pain.org](http://www.iasp-pain.org)

### AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF PALLIATIVE MEDICINE (ANZSPM) CONFERENCE

**15-17 September 2010**  
**Ars moriendi – Palliative Medicine  
in the 21st Century**  
Hyatt Regency, Adelaide, SA  
[www.anzspm.org.au](http://www.anzspm.org.au)

### THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

**Rehabilitation 2010: Mind and Body  
6 - 8 October 2010**  
Hilton on the Park Hotel, Melbourne  
[www.dconferences.com.au/rehab2010](http://www.dconferences.com.au/rehab2010)

### FACULTY OF PAIN MEDICINE (FPM) 2010 SPRING MEETING

**Transitions in Pain  
8-10 October 2010**  
City Hall, Newcastle NSW  
[www.anzca.edu.au/fpm](http://www.anzca.edu.au/fpm)

### 4TH ASIA PACIFIC CERVICAL SPINE SOCIETY CONFERENCE

**3-6 November 2010**  
Hilton Hotel, Sydney, NSW  
[www.dconferences.com.au/apcss](http://www.dconferences.com.au/apcss)

### MIND AND ITS POTENTIAL CONFERENCE

**18-19 November 2010**  
Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, NSW  
[www.mindanditspotential.com.au](http://www.mindanditspotential.com.au)

### NEW ZEALAND PAIN SOCIETY 36TH ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

**Planning for Pain Management  
17-20 March 2011**  
Hotel Grand Chancellor, Christchurch, New Zealand  
[www.nzps.org.nz](http://www.nzps.org.nz)

### FACULTY OF PAIN MEDICINE (FPM) REFRESHER COURSE

**Pain Management – Getting Closer  
to the Dragon Pearl  
13 May 2011**  
Hong Kong Convention Centre, Hong Kong  
[www.anzca.edu.au](http://www.anzca.edu.au)

### AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF ANAESTHETISTS ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

**Seeking the Dragon Pearl  
14-17 May 2011**  
Hong Kong Convention Centre, Hong Kong  
[www.anzca.edu.au](http://www.anzca.edu.au)

### AUSTRALIAN PAIN SOCIETY 31ST ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

**The Frontiers of Pain  
12-16 June 2011**  
Darwin Convention Centre, Darwin, NT  
[www.dconferences.com.au/aps2011](http://www.dconferences.com.au/aps2011)

## New Members

Ms	Raelene	Clark	Pain Management
Mr	Colin	Brown	Government Regulator
Miss	Belinda	Kipping	Occupational Therapy
Miss	Kate	Miller	Occupational Therapy
Ms	Julianne	Richards	Nursing
Ms	Kate	Kotzur	Nursing

Ms	Janelle	Keyser	Nursing
Mrs	Michele	Cree	Nursing
Mr	Jonathan	Hakim	Neurology
Mrs	Freda	Heyman	Pharmacy
Ms	Debbi	Vivian	Psychology

## The **FRONTIERS** of Pain



Australian Pain Society 31st Annual Scientific Meeting | 12 - 16 June 2011 | Darwin Convention Centre, Northern Territory, Australia



### DEADLINES

Topical Session Submissions | **1 October 2010**

Free Paper & Poster Submissions | **11 February 2011**

Early Bird Registration | **15 April 2011**

Draft program available online [www.dconferences.com.au/aps2011](http://www.dconferences.com.au/aps2011)

For sponsorship & exhibition opportunities contact the Secretariat - details overleaf



**Prof Gary Bennett**

is Professor and Canada Senior Research Chair, Department of Anesthesia in the Faculty of Dentistry, and at Alan Edwards Centre for Research on Pain, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. For the past 30 years, his research has focused on peripheral nerve disorders and the mechanisms underlying neuropathic pain syndromes.



**Prof Christopher Eccleston**

is Director of the Centre for Pain Research at the University of Bath, UK. He is also the Coordinating Editor of the Pain, Palliative and Supportive Care Review Group of the Cochrane Collaboration, and serves on the editorial board of numerous journals. Chris has worked in chronic pain management for 20 years.



**Dr Christine Miaskowski**

is Professor in the Department of Physiological Nursing, University of California, San Francisco, USA. She is an internationally recognized expert in pain & symptom management. Her research relates to determining characteristics that predict most severely affected patients, evaluating deleterious effects of unrelieved symptoms and developing interventions to assist cancer patients.

## The **FRONTIERS** of Pain

Australian Pain Society 31st Annual Scientific Meeting | 12 - 16 June 2011  
Darwin Convention Centre,  
Northern Territory, Australia

### PLUS

- Pre Conference Workshops | Sunday 12 June
- Extensive Industry Exhibition
- Welcome Reception at Crocosaurus Cove
- Gala Dinner Under the Stars
- Wednesday morning free for sightseeing - including Fishing, Territory Wildlife Park & Darwin city tours - Don't miss this opportunity to visit Australia's 'Top End'



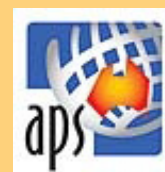
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