



The Australian Pain Society

2009  
*Distinguished  
Member  
Awards*

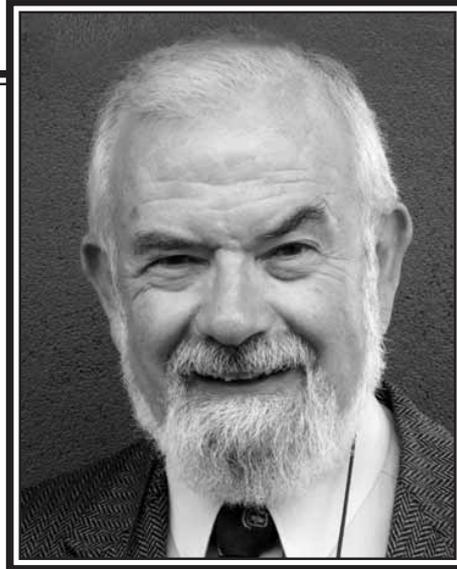
Awarded for services to the promotion,  
treatment and science of pain management  
and lifelong contribution to the  
Australian Pain Society.

Professor George Mendelson graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from the University of Melbourne in 1970. He became a member of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) in 1976, and in 1986 obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine from Monash University.

Dr Mendelson is an Honorary Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Psychological Medicine at Monash University. From 1979 until 2002 he held appointments as Visiting Consultant Psychiatrist to the Division of Adult Psychiatry at Prince Henry's Hospital and Monash Medical Centre.

His interest in pain medicine developed in the mid 1970s, when he was a member of a multi-disciplinary research team, headed by neurologist, Dr Henryk Kranz, and funded by the NHMRC, which undertook a prospective study of the efficacy of acupuncture in the treatment of chronic low back pain. That research project led to a number of presentations at Australian and international conferences (including the Second World Congress on Pain held in Montreal in 1978), as well as publications in national and international journals. The main findings were published in 1983 in the American Journal of Medicine.

During the 1970s a number of seminal articles and books exploring the psychiatric and psychosocial aspects of chronic pain were published by



## George Mendelson

MBBS; MD; FRANZCP; FFPMANZCA

psychiatrists such as Harold Merskey, Issy Pilowsky and Michael Bond, and the acupuncture study presented the opportunity to examine the influence of psychological factors on the effectiveness of this modality on the experience of chronic pain. This was explored systematically within the prospective study, and led to the MD dissertation titled *Psychological Factors Affecting Response to Acupuncture Treatment of Chronic Pain*.

The late 1970s saw the establishment of multidisciplinary pain clinics in a range of Australian hospitals and centres. Under the guidance of the late Professor Jack Nayman a Multi-disciplinary Pain Management Centre was set up at what was known as the Royal Southern Memorial Hospital, in the Melbourne suburb of Caulfield. The centre's Director Dr Terry Little, had previously worked at a New York pain clinic while undertaking advanced anaesthetic training. The centre was fortunate to have clinical psychologist Dr Connie Peck who had trained in Seattle with Professor Bill Fordyce, involved in its early phase. Professor Mendelson was a foundation member of the centre's clinical staff, and has maintained an active involvement with the pain clinic (now known as the Caulfield Pain Management and Research Centre), for the past 30 years, including a five-year period as its Clinical Director.

When the Australian Pain Society was founded it became a member society of the International

Association for the Study of Pain. Professor Mendelson was a Federal Councillor of the APS, representing Victoria, 1980 - 1982, becoming Vice-President in 1986 and serving as President, 1988 - 1990.

His active involvement with the IASP dates from 1989, when he was a member of the Task Force on Guidelines for Desirable Characteristics of Pain Management Centres. He was a member of the IASP Council from 1993 - 1996, has served as Chair of the IASP Committee on Ethical Issues, and was a member of the Committee on Research. Professor Mendelson has also been Chair of the Special Interest Group on Clinical-Legal Issues in Pain since 2005.

During 1999, George was elected a Foundation Fellow of the Faculty of Pain Medicine, Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, and he is a member of the Examination Committee of the Faculty. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. In addition to active involvement with the Australian Pain Society, the International Association for the Study of Pain and the Faculty of Pain Medicine, ANZCA, George Mendelson has been involved with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists both in Victoria and nationally. He has been a member of the Victorian Branch Committee of the RANZCP since 1988, the Honorary Secretary of the Victorian Branch Committee, 2003 - 2004, and for many years has been the Convenor of the Forensic Psychiatry Subcommittee.

George has been a member of the Ethical Practice Committee of the RANZCP since 2004. In May 2006 he was elected as Chair of the Ethical Practice Committee by the General Council of the RANZCP, and he continues to hold that position.

His main research interests have been in the areas of pain and compensation, civil forensic psychiatry, and post-traumatic psychiatric syndromes. He has published approximately 120 articles, reviews and book chapters, and is the author of *Psychiatric Aspects of Personal Injury Claims*, published during 1988 in the USA, by Charles C. Thomas.

