



The Australian Pain Society

2016
*Distinguished
Member
Award*

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

Professor Stephen Gibson is a wonderful choice to be an Australian Pain Society (APS) distinguished member. Some of you will know him from his time as APS President (2009 to 2010 inclusive).

Stephen is a humble but accomplished psychology pain academic whose expertise ranges widely from laboratory testing for pain, to projects translating evidence into practice and highlighting our knowledge

gaps. This is particularly relevant in the field of pain related to aging and dementia.

You may have had the good fortune to have Stephen visit your poster or see your presentation at a conference, where over the years he has offered insights into research design and quiet words of encouragement in whatever skill or finding you have displayed. He has assisted many successful PhD candidates who have gone on to higher research, inspired students and clinicians to undertake research, and advised clinicians whose practices have blossomed by the inclusion of research in clinical work.

During the 1980s Stephen qualified as a psychologist at the University of Melbourne and gained his PhD at La Trobe University. He is now an Honorary Professor of Medicine at the University of Melbourne, Deputy Director of the National Aging & Research Institute (NARI) in Melbourne and Head of Research at Caulfield Pain Management and Research Centre in Alfred Health.



Stephen Gibson

BBSc (Hons), PhD, MAPsS

Stephen is a longstanding member of the APS, joining back in 1990 and, despite a gruelling schedule, has rarely missed a conference since.

In 2005 under A/Prof Roger Goucke's leadership Stephen was a major contributor to the *Pain in residential aged care facilities, management strategies guideline*,

published by the Australian Pain Society. He went on to lead his research group to use the age appropriate

assessment tools and integrated pain management techniques into models of gold standard treatment approaches for chronic pain in older adults, in multidisciplinary geriatric clinics and for quality improvement in pain in nursing homes Australia wide. This internationally recognised definitive text is currently being updated and Stephen is again an integral part of the review team.

Stephen's time on the APS Board was notable for his contributions to speaker and topic suggestions for many of our Annual Scientific Meetings, his ability to direct attention to pain across the lifespan, and as President, for his leadership and contributions to the development of the National Pain Strategy.

He co-chaired the National Pain Summit held at Parliament House, Canberra in March 2010 which resulted in his appointment as an inaugural Board member for PainAustralia (established in February 2011, after the National Pain Summit). Stephen also devotes his time to assist with the review of our APS/APRA PhD Scholarship applications, adding his

valuable support to this flagship research training initiative, which was established over 20 years ago.

Prof Gibson's clinical research career spans over 25 years and has been directed toward examining age differences in pain perception, exploring neurophysiological mechanisms of pain in conditions that commonly affect older persons eg osteoarthritis, postherpetic neuralgia and dementia, and improving pain assessment and management in persons with dementia. The NARI laboratory is now widely regarded as a leading world centre for research into pain in older persons. There has been a strong emphasis on studying the impact of pain on mood, function and quality of life, as well as the psychological mediators of mood disturbance and disability. The other major area of research activity has focussed on the evaluation and establishment of pain treatment approaches targeted to the special needs of older persons.

Internationally recognised for his work on pain in older persons and particularly in those with dementia, Stephen has delivered over 100 international and national invited presentations since 1995, including multiple keynote and plenary lectures. Major presentations include a plenary lecture at the 2002 IASP 10th World Pain Congress in San Diego, a keynote at the 2003 Canadian Centre on Health and Aging, the 2005 Massey University Distinguished Lecture at the International Psychogeriatric Society meeting in New Zealand, the 2006 Jocelyn Wales Distinguished Lecture, a keynote address to the Australasian Podiatry Association in 2007, a plenary lecture at the British Pain Society meeting, Manchester 2010 and the Bonica Lecture at the 2014 Australian Pain Society Meeting in Hobart.

Internationally, Stephen is on the executive committee of Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) action TD1005 (Pain Assessment in Patients with Impaired Cognition, especially Dementia), on the scientific committee and current chair of the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) special interest group for Pain in Older Persons. He is a contributing member of the IASP taskforce for the development of a core curriculum for professional education on pain (the major reference source for professional training in 62 countries including Australia), and the only Australian scientist on the American Geriatric Society panel for research into pain in older persons. He is as well a member of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) pain consortium (USA).

In his own words... My major area of research interest has been persistent pain and its treatment in older people. Persistent pain affects more than 50% of the older population and can lead to major impacts on mood, function, sleep, cognition, social relationships and quality of life.

Over recent years I have become particularly interested in pain in persons with dementia. How can we assess pain when verbal communication is impaired? Does dementia alter the ability to feel and process pain? What are the best treatments for this group? I have developed assessment questionnaires and used state-of-the-art neuroimaging techniques, experimental pain studies and randomised controlled trials to attempt to provide evidence-based answers to these important questions. Our work has already had a major impact on improving pain assessment and treatment in this very vulnerable group. ►

Stephen recently highlighted that his research having the greatest impact was a study using experimental pain and fMRI neuroimaging to determine whether pain processing is impaired in persons with Alzheimer's disease (2006). This research raised many concerns about the apparent under-treatment of pain in persons with dementia. He said... *We were able to demonstrate that pain sensitivity and pain processing is not compromised and indeed, may be even more distressing in persons with mild-moderate Alzheimer's disease.*

It remains the only study of its type in the world and has contributed to a major shift in clinical practice, such that analgesics are now routinely given to all persons with dementia.

Prof Gibson has published in many high quality international journals such as *Pain, Brain, Lancet, NeurosciBiobeh. Rev, MJA, Neuroimage, Clin.J.Pain, Neurobiol Age, JAGS*. He has published over 150 scientific papers with more than 9,000 citations and 22 papers being cited over 100 times.

Stephen is married to Lesley and has a family with three children (teenage and young adults). They have supported his wonderful endeavours and have balanced out his long hours of deskwork. He maintains his interest in basketball and plays in a team which came together over 30 years ago! He has also shared his prodigious knowledge of wine at many APS functions, reflecting his own large wine collection.

Prof Stephen Gibson is a very impressive, quiet, persistent and consistent achiever - someone for whom we of the APS have a great respect and appreciation, and we congratulate him on this APS Distinguished Member Award. ■

