



THE
AUSTRALIAN
PAIN SOCIETY

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MEDIA RELEASE

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REHABILITATION IS BETTER THAN DRUGS FOR COMMON BACK PAIN

Dr Geoffrey Speldewinde, President of the Australian Pain Society and a Rehabilitation and Pain Physician has endorsed a recent ground-breaking review (<http://ard.bmj.com/content/early/2017/01/20/annrheumdis-2016-210597.info>); the findings of which corroborate what many clinicians and patients have asserted for years - that supposedly effective pain medications 'just don't seem to do the job'.

Dr Speldewinde went on to say that although it is very important to be certain that back pain is not a symptom of a serious underlying illness (e.g., a cancer, infection or fracture), on average there is less than a one percent chance that this will be the case. Your Health Professional can assist in checking for this remote possibility.

The Australian Pain Society offers many recommendations of a non-pharmacological nature to guide the 80% of Australians who will at some stage in their life have a sustained period of back pain. Whilst these options are not as simple as 'taking a pill', they are essential in assisting individuals with back pain develop a healthier recovery trajectory. Techniques include:

- maintaining activity as best tolerated,
- addressing stressful aspects of the circumstance,
- continuing to participate in life's many joys and responsibilities (e.g., work) and
- keeping use of pain drugs to a minimum.

According to Dr Speldewinde, although the review was particularly looking at sustained use of analgesics (paracetamol and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories) once "new" pain looks like lasting a lot longer than previously expected, it is a timely reminder for all of us to carefully consider what medications we use and our expectations of their impacts and effectiveness.

When it comes to managing back pain, the Australian Pain Society strongly recommends employing these practical and restorative non-drug approaches; all of which have been shown to provide equal or better benefit than medications alone and with much fewer side-effects.

About the Australian Pain Society

The Australian Pain Society (APS) is Australia's leading national forum of a wide range of university-trained health professionals (including GP and Specialist 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 ring or email:

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