

Non pharmacological approaches in chronic pain

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What is pain?

- Pain is an unpleasant sensory and **emotional** experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage.
- Pain is an individual and Subjective experience modulated by physiological, psychological and environmental factors such as; previous events, culture, prognosis, coping strategies, fear and anxiety.

International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP)

Chronic Pain

- chronic pain and physical limitations can have great psychological and emotional effects on a person with pain related problems.
- Living with pain can lead to problems such as depression, anxiety, all of which can exacerbate pain and disability.
- Usually pain is regarded as chronic when it lasts or recurs for more than 3 to 6 months

Merskey H, Bogduk N. Classification of chronic pain. 2nd ed. Seattle: IASP Press, 1994. p. 1

Mental disorders associated with pain

- Estimates for rates of depression for people with chronic pain- between 30% and 54% (Banks & Kerns, 1996)
- Estimates for rates of anxiety for people with chronic pain- between 20% and 40%

(Asmundson & Katz, 2009)

Management of chronic pain

- In chronic pain problems, achieving the best outcome for the patient often involves a variable blend of pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches that addresses the multidimensional components of pain and suffering.

Non-Pharmacological approach

Physical Treatment options:

- Exercises
- Stretching/ range of motion/ flexibility
- Strengthening
- General aerobic conditioning
- Relaxation
- Postural stabilization
- Yoga

Non-Pharmacological approach cont...

Passive physical modalities:

-Therapeutic cold

- cold packs
- Ice massage
- cold water immersion

- Therapeutic heat

- Hot packs/heating pads

Non-Pharmacological approach cont...

Occupational therapy techniques:

- Ergonomic assessment / adaptations
- Activities of daily living/ work modifications
- Pacing strategies
- Body mechanics and dynamic posturing

Manual therapy:

- Mobilization with stretching
- Manipulation (chiropractic treatment)
- Massage

Traction

Non-Pharmacological approach cont...

Cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT) Consists of 3 phases;

- Education about biopsychosocial model of pain.
- Skills training: Relaxation techniques, activity pacing, pleasant activity scheduling, imagery techniques, distraction strategies, cognitive restructuring (changing negative thought patterns), problems solving and goal setting.
- application phase : practice and application of the skills in real-life situations

Non-Pharmacological approach cont...

Active coping characterized by;

- Solving problems
- Seeking information
- Seeking social support
- Seeking professional help
- changing environments
- planning activities in response to some stress, physical or emotional. This is to avoid coping strategies, which lead people into activities (such as alcohol use) or mental states (such as withdrawal) that keep them from directly addressing stressful events

References

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3. Pain management guidelines, Ministry of Health, 2012

THANK YOU