

Pain management services: the north Queensland experience

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Prior to 2011, the Townsville Pain Management Clinic was a team of 6 full time equivalent (FTE) staff, and provided a service to local patients only. Following a significant increase in funding from the Queensland Government, the North Queensland Persistent Pain Management Service (NQPPMS) now consists 35 staff (25 FTE) in Townsville, Mackay and Cairns. We provide patient education, multi-disciplinary patient assessment and management, tele-health, group programs and interventional procedures for people throughout North Queensland. Staffing includes Pain Medicine Specialists and Registrars, Addiction Medicine, Psychiatry, Rehabilitation Medicine, Neurosurgery, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Pharmacy and Administration. Our team receives in excess of 1000 referrals each year, and provides approximately 500 occasions of service each month. Services are provided face to face in Townsville and by satellite staff in Cairns and Mackay; via outreach to Cairns, Mackay and Mount Isa; and via tele-health to people throughout North Queensland.

Our key achievements have included:

- the development and implementation of an innovative and locally appropriate model of care
- an efficient patient triage and flow process, beginning with a self-management, multi-disciplinary education and motivation workshop in line with contemporary models elsewhere
- recruitment and retention of a full multi-disciplinary team, spread over three Hospital and Health Services
- the development of a locally appropriate Pain Management Program
- accreditation to train Pain Medicine Specialists
- provision of the full range of medical procedural pain management interventions
- integration within James Cook University teaching for Physiotherapy, Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Nursing and Medical students
- integration with Registrar teaching for General Practice, Anaesthetics, Rehabilitation Medicine, Palliative Care Medicine and Emergency Medicine
- enrolment in the electronic Persistent Pain Outcomes Collaboration (ePPOC)—an international benchmarking pain management outcomes tool
- integration with the Townsville Acute Pain Management Service
- a successful roll-out of multi-disciplinary health professional educational workshops in Cairns, Mackay, Mount Isa and Townsville, with approximately 400 participants giving strongly positive feedback. NQPPMS is now an accredited RACGP CME training provider
- the presence of a great team with a strong work ethic and high morale.

A narrative describing the development of NQPPMS will be presented: successes, barriers and challenges. This will include activity and outcomes data, along with a description of strategies developed to support colleagues and manage patients with chronic pain across the regional, rural and remote spectrum. Patient flow will be illustrated by a case presentation.

Key references

1. Blyth, F. M., et al. (2001). "Chronic pain in Australia: a prevalence study." *Pain* **89**(2): 127-134.
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3. Economics, A. (2007). "The high price of pain: the economic impact of persistent pain in Australia." *Sydney: MBF Foundation*: 9-11.
4. Fishman, S. M., et al. (2013). "Core competencies for pain management: results of an interprofessional consensus summit." *Pain Medicine* **14**(7): 971-981.
5. Gureje, O., et al. (1998). "Persistent pain and well-being: a World Health Organization study in primary care." *Jama* **280**(2): 147-151.
6. Loeser, J. D. and R.-D. Treede (2008). "The Kyoto protocol of IASP Basic Pain Terminology." *Pain* **137**(3): 473-477.

Further reading/websites

1. Therapeutic Guidelines Analgesic <https://www.clinicalguidelines.gov.au/portal/2201/therapeutic-guidelines-analgesic-version-6>
2. Nicholas, Michael. *Manage Your Pain 3rd Edition*. HarperCollins Australia, 2011.
3. Butler, David S., and G. Lorimer Moseley. *Explain Pain 2nd Edn*. Noigroup Publications, 2013.
4. <http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/chronic-pain>
5. <http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/Public+Content/SA+Health+Internet/Clinical+resources/Clinical+topics/Medicines+and+drugs/opioids/>

Presenter

Dr Matthew Bryant (FANZCA, FFPANZCA, FRACGP, FACRRM, Grad Dip Rural GP, MBBS) is Director of the North Queensland Persistent Pain Management Service. His team of 35 people (25 full-time-equivalent staff) provide multidisciplinary care to a population of 800,000 people, across five hospital and health services, and an area of 770,000 square kilometres. Prior to obtaining his Pain Medicine and Anaesthesia Fellowships, Matt worked as a rural GP in a number of locations across north Queensland and the Northern Territory. He is currently a Senior Lecturer at James Cook University, a member of the Townsville Hospital Foundation Board, and Chairman of the ANZCA Faculty of Pain Medicine Queensland Regional Committee.