

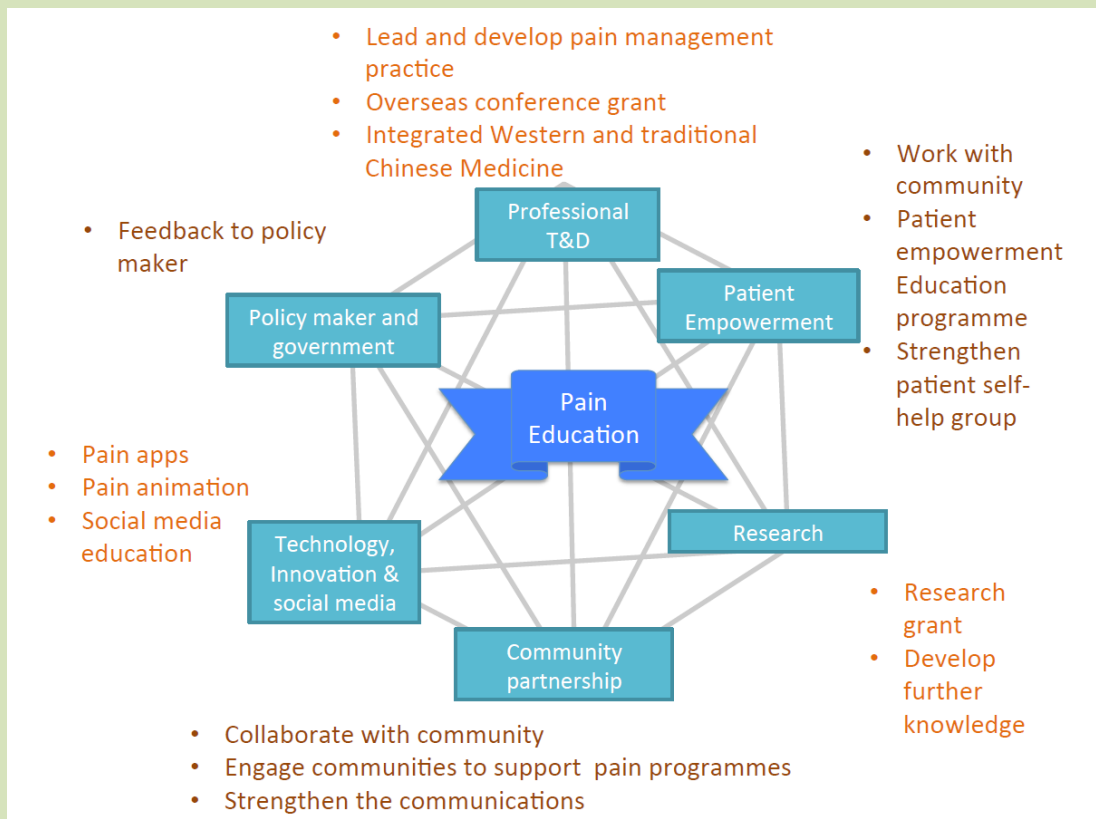
PAIN EDUCATION, WHAT'S NEXT?

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Pain, whether physical or emotional, is universal. It may affect one's life!

Pain is one of the most common reasons patients seek for health care. Therefore, our professionals must possess the essential knowledge. There are a large number and various conditions associated with pain, and pain management is a major challenge for health care system. Due to advancing technology and understanding of physical illness, life expectancy is increasing. However, patients experiencing pain are receiving inadequate care.

The Hong Kong Pain Society (HKPS) has been building a local community of members from multidisciplinary to nurture collaboration, networking, and organizing through membership, newsletter, and annual scientific meeting. Our activities echo to the theme of Global Year 2018 of International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) is "Excellence in Pain Education". I would like to take this opportunity to present our activities and collaboration with other organizations in promoting pain education on various levels: (1) professional (2) Patient empowerment (3) Research (4) Community (5) Technology and innovation. And the way forward is seeking for conversation channel to our policy maker and government



1. Professional training and development

Firstly, HKPS holds annual scientific meeting (ASM), pain education series and scientific symposium to explore the critical importance of evidence-informed biopsychosocial patient evaluation and communication and their interrelationship with pain conditions and management. The ultimate aim is transfer of knowledge and clinical expertise in pain management on different levels.

This year we promote the “Essential Pain Management (EPM)” in ASM 2018 due to the urge to improve knowledge and attitudes in a systematic way. EPM is a cost –effective, multidisciplinary programme to implement a simple pain management framework. It uses a “snowball” model for training that combines workshop and the EPM instructor workshop with the support of more experienced instructors.

Secondly, HKPS provides the conference grant for regular and life members to attend overseas international conferences on management. The conference grant aims at furthering world dialogue on the pain related topics to enrich our members’ perspective.

Thirdly, Integrated Western and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in the management of chronic back pain, cancer pain management continues to develop. TCM deals with the body as a whole, on the other hand, Western medicine, relies on empirically gathered data. TCM has long term effects while western medicine can quickly act on the targets. The way forward is promoting and facilitating the knowledge sharing in these areas to benefit our pain patients.

2. Patient empowerment

Comprehensive multidisciplinary education programme care for chronic pain patients in various public pain clinics is one way of patient empowerment. The programs focus on developing patient’s appraisal and coping skills with physical functions. During the sessions, patients share experiences and take stock on changes in their conditions since the previous session; set and review goals and action plans; engage in themed discussions on topics such as managing pain, weight controlling and healthy eating, and pacing techniques; carry out supervised exercises, and agree exercises to do at home. Patient self-help groups are engaged to strengthen the relationship and mutual support.

HKPS also held Joint Pain Day in 2016 and 2017 at the Belcher Bay Park, Kennedy Town to promote public awareness through healthy activities workshop and health education booths on prevention and relief of pain. This year we shall continue our effort to promote the event again.

3. Research

In 2015, our Society has set up research grant and invited the regular and life members of the Society to apply for sponsorships to conduct a self-initiated research or clinical study related to pain. We are promoting to develop further knowledge in the understanding of the nature of pain. Producing sound scientific results will be vital in giving a positive input to the healthcare policy or best practice formulation in the fast-changing field.

4. Community partnership

Communities are taking a pivotal role in improving and sustaining good health. Increased public awareness, better education, together with the acquisition of community and NGO supports, will give more cost-effective resource utilization.

It is important to build collaborative relationships among health and care professionals, patients, carers and communities to strengthen our knowledge and sustain the pain management. To achieve this aim, generous supports from the Government, District Boards, and local communities would be necessary.

5. Technology, innovation and social media

In this Big Data world, our access to information is not limited to web content but also Apps through on smartphones. Social media for pain management education is one state-of-the art measure of pain management. Collaboration with IT department could enhance the local electronic pain assessment and save the hassles in recording so as to facilitate further audit and data analysis in public hospitals.

HKPS also is producing the animation about pain physiology and related education in Cantonese for our Hong Kong citizens to grasp the basic concepts about pain.

6. Policy maker and government

The way forward is to promote better pain management and education by seeking opportunities for dialogues with our policy makers, healthcare planners and government officials.

Conclusion

Better Pain Management involves many stakeholders. The Government and policy makers should be convinced of the importance and cost-effectiveness. The community and patients should be empowered to take good care of their own health and wellbeing. Professionals and healthcare worker should continue to equip themselves in face of the advancing challenges. Researchers and academics should continue to expand our knowledge frontier. With all these concerted efforts acting together, we can all look forward to a healthier and happier tomorrow.