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Connections: The Academy Formally Embraces an Integrative Model of Pain Management

BY DEBRA NELSON-HOGAN, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND EDITOR OF THIS ISSUE OF *THE PAIN PRACTITIONER*

I used to be fascinated by *Connections*, the documentary series created and narrated by James Burke, a science historian who took an interdisciplinary approach to the history of science and invention, and demonstrated how various discoveries, scientific achievements, and world events were interconnected and built off each other. He would start way back in history—say the Middle Ages—and weave a tale that would show the relationship between Napoleon and the development of the modern computer, or wallpaper to the germ theory, or, my personal favorite, cornflakes to communism. The significance of his work was illustrating how technology, science, and social change are intertwined through history. He debunks the idea that any of these can exist alone: “Unfortunately, so much specialization falsely creates the illusion that knowledge and discovery exist in a vacuum, in context only with their own disciplines, when in reality they are born from interdisciplinary connections” (1).

In a world where specialization in medicine can often trump team work, some pain management clinicians actually might practice in a vacuum; however, most of them, and certainly our members, know that isolation is a prescription for failure. Twenty years ago, the Academy was founded on the concept that interdisciplinary care for pain management leads to improved patient care and we flourished under this model. Burke’s “interdisciplinary connections” encompass physical, psychological, spiritual, and social realms and communities; in short, life. These connections, transferred to pain management, beg us to look beyond the practice team, a body part or disease state, and look at the person as a whole.

The idea of integrative medicine as a better care model has been embraced by many, including the Academy Board of Directors, who recently voted to add “integrative” to our mission statement. Beginning with this issue and a

discussion of how certain comorbid conditions of pain affect the whole being, the Academy is affirming its commitment to “patient-centered care.” This will permeate the Annual Clinical Meeting, which will be held in Phoenix October 8-11, 2009. The theme, “Integrative Pain Management for Optimal Patient Care,” not only represents the Academy’s continued commitment to providing educational opportunities that focus on effective integrative care for people in pain, but it serves to reinforce the fact that although integrative pain care shares common goals with interdisciplinary pain care, they are not the same. Although integrative pain management most often includes an interdisciplinary approach, its orientation is toward healing and whole person including the body, mind, spirit, lifestyle, and community.

We are pleased to be able to present our Annual Meeting in partnership with the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine, a program of the University of Arizona—one of the leading integrative medical education providers in the world. The Program focuses its efforts on education, clinical care, and research, with particular emphasis on education. In addition, we will also be working together with the program to present the next issue of *The Pain Practitioner*, and on other educational endeavors. We believe this exciting partnership will allow us to look at ways that specialized clinicians who treat pain can better work together to look at the whole person and thus, improve patient care. In doing so, the interdisciplinary connections that Burke so poignantly and entertainingly speaks about will be strengthened.

REFERENCE

1. Homepage. Knowledge Web: A project of the James Burke Institute. Available at: http://k-web.org/public_html/home.htm. Accessed April 1, 2009.

Academy Adopts an Integrative Model of Pain Care

BY LENNIE DUENSING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ACADEMY
AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *THE PAIN PRACTITIONER*



A New Mission

Since its inception in 1988, the American Academy of Pain Management has held the philosophy that pain is best managed through an interdisciplinary approach—one in which clinicians representing a variety of disciplines learn together (particularly at our Annual Meeting); understand that pain conditions most often need treatment through several modalities; and, work together to achieve optimal patient care. At the last Board of Directors meeting on February 21, the Board voted to embrace an “integrative” model of care and wrote the following new mission statement:

The American Academy of Pain Management (the Academy) is a non-profit organization that educates clinicians about pain and its management through an integrative interdisciplinary approach. The Academy provides an environment for clinicians from a variety of healthcare disciplines to network and share knowledge for optimal patient care.

This expanded statement reinforces the fact that although integrative pain care shares common goals with interdisciplinary pain care, they are not the same. We realize the immense economic, political, and social challenges to achieving this, but believe that such a individualized, patient-centered model will lead to the best patient outcomes and advancement of the field overall.

The Academy defines Integrative pain management as:

- Patient-centered and reaffirms the importance of the relationship between practitioner and patient
- Focused on the whole person—mind, body, and spirit
- Informed by evidence
- Makes use of, and brings together, all appropriate therapeutic approaches and healthcare professionals to reduce pain and achieve optimal health and healing.

Teaming up with the Experts for the 20th Annual Clinical Meeting and the Summer Issue of *The Pain Practitioner*

As part of our work in becoming a truly integrative pain management organization, the Academy is proud to be joining forces with the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine (a program of the University of Arizona) to produce the next issue of *The Pain Practitioner*, and for our upcoming Annual Meeting, entitled “Integrative Pain Management for Optimal Patient Care.” The meeting will be held from October 8-11, in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Center for Integrative Medicine has been leading the transformation of healthcare by creating, educating, and actively supporting a community that embodies the philosophy and practice of healing-oriented medicine, and addressing mind, body and spirit. Since its founding, the program has focused its efforts on three areas: education, clinical care and research—with the primary emphasis on education. The Center offers a broad range of educational opportunities for healthcare professionals with an interest in learning and practicing the principles of integrative medicine. The majority of the Center’s educational offerings are online, including its flagship program: The Fellowship in Integrative Medicine.

Academy to Call on Members to Take a Stand

On February 22, the Academy, along with its Corporate Council, the Board and staff began planning an effort that would energize, empower, and activate clinicians, patients, caregivers, and others to work as legislative/regulatory advocates for both patients and clinicians. To begin this endeavor, the Academy will be surveying members to help identify those who would be willing to participate and at what level. We also want to know what work you are already doing on the state and federal level. In coming months, we will also have an advocacy section on the website to keep you informed about what’s going on in your state, actions that need to be taken, and how you can get involved.



Become a Member of the American Academy of Pain Management

Membership entitles you to a host of excellent resources and educational benefits:

- Receive quality publications including *The Pain Practitioner*, the Academy's quarterly magazine and *Currents*, the Academy's e-newsletter.
- Access to the Academy's Credentialing Program and the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge as an interdisciplinary pain practitioner. For more information about the Credentialing Program, [click here](#).
- Your own listing in the searchable database of the Academy's website, where patients and other practitioners can find you.
- Networking opportunities with thousands of other clinicians.
- Professional development through Continuing Education Department.
- Reduced registration rates for the Academy's Annual Clinical Meeting.
- Advocacy Alerts and updates on current regulations and legislation.

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