

Media release

March 2012

At last some relief for persistent pain sufferers

Persistent pain sufferers can now find some relief through the new St Andrew's Multidisciplinary Pain Service (StAMPS) program.

Persistent pain is very common and affects one in five Australians according to an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report 2008-09.

Anaesthetist and Pain Medicine Physician Dr Jason Ray said persistent pain is a complex mix of physical and psychological symptoms and is ideally managed by a biopsychosocial approach.

"While it is very difficult to treat persistent pain, it has been proven that it is best managed in a group setting with a multidisciplinary team where the health professionals work in close cooperation to address all aspects of the patient's situation," Dr Ray said

The StAMPS pain management program combines the expertise of Pain Medicine Specialists, an Addiction Medicine Specialist, a Rehabilitation Physician, a Spinal Surgeon, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and a Psychologist who are all experienced in treating pain.

Patients can join the four-week intensive StAMPS program once the medical aspects of their condition have been addressed.

St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, Manager for Allied Health and StAMPS program coordinator, Jane Clarke, said key components of the self-management program included understanding pain, pacing and exercise therapy, relaxation/mindfulness training and cognitive behavioural therapy.

"After a series of assessments, groups of six people undertake a daily fitness and exercise program and attend lectures about improving quality of life and managing pain," Ms Clarke said.

Self-help methods are taught on how to pace and schedule daily activities, modify tasks, manage emotions, goal setting and relaxation/mindfulness skills.



Vocational and work issues are addressed, along with other issues affecting the patient's health and personal life.

Ms Clarke said the program is suitable for a wide range of patients including those with complex regional pain syndrome, chronic back pain, knee pain or persistent pain for more than three months.

Patients undergo a one-week comprehensive assessment and education program prior to commencing the intensive four-week persistent pain management program which runs from 8.30am to 2.45pm, three days a week. The cost is covered for most privately insured patients.

For more information regarding StAMPS call 3834 4525.

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For more information: Susan Collins, Niche, 3368 1230 or 0415 961 621