

A Multi-disciplinary Approach to Pain

By Dr. Benjamin Taimoorazy, Guardian Headache and Pain Management Institute

The Greek goddess of revenge, Poena, was sent to punish the mortal fools who had angered the gods. Poena also gave us the word pain. Many ancient cultures believed pain and disease were punishment for human folly. They tried to appease angry gods with rituals like votive offerings and scapegoats, sacrificial animals that carried the sins of people out into the wilderness.

Some of the medical practices from the ancient world have been updated for use by modern physicians: “ The Egyptians used to take electric Eels of the Nile lay them over the wound of patients”. A similar technique is used today to relieve pain. Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation or TENS is a popular treatment for lower back and arthritis pain.

The first new significant treatment for pain occurred in 1846 with use of anesthesia for surgery. The growth of pain clinics has paralleled the growth of anesthesia as specialty. The involvement of anesthesiologists was an extension of their role in post operative pain relief and regional anesthesia. In spite of the dazzling array of modern treatments for pain, some experts wonder if ancient and primitive cultures still have much to teach us about pain and human health. “ Ancient people saw pain more accurately- pain not only as a physical condition but as an emotional and spiritual condition. They would work with the entire patient”.

By definition pain is considered to be chronic when it has lasted more than 3-6 months, has significant psychological / emotional affects and limits the ability of a person to fully function. This may be associated with sleep disturbances, lack of energy and depression. In many chronic pain conditions the pain persists beyond the usual course of an acute disease or healing of an injury and people may spend years seeking relief from the unrelenting and agonizing pain and suffering.

The first modern pain management center was set up at the University of Washington in 1961. In the 1970s *Fordyce* and *Sternbach* established the principles of pain treatment using a multidisciplinary approach. This approach allows treatment of physical, emotional, behavioral, vocational, and social aspects of the pain in a more effective manner. **Chronic pain usually results from many causes and it is important to understand and treat all of the causes in order to alleviate and manage the pain. Patient education is a crucial part of this pain management approach as patients may have already spent years seeing various specialists** and misconceptions about the nature of the pain and its significance may need to be dispelled. The goal is to decrease the subjective pain experience, increase the general level of activity, decrease drug consumption and finally, return to employment and full quality of life.

For more information about the diagnosis and treatment of chronic headaches and other pain related conditions, you may contact Dr. Benjamin Taimoorazy at Guardian Headache and Pain Management Institute, 309-808-1700, www.GuardianPainInstitute.com This new practice, located at 2203 Eastland Drive, Suite #7, in Bloomington, opened on March 7th and offers a multi-disciplinary approach to managing pain.

The high prevalence and significant negative impact from chronic headache conditions suggest a need for effective identification and management of headache complaints in clinical practice.

Many people with chronic pain can be helped if they understand all the causes of pain and the many and varied steps that can be taken to undo what chronic pain has done. Scientists believe that advances in neuroscience will lead to more and better treatments for chronic pain in the years to come