The Psychology of Pain

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In the past, we had very little understanding about the nature of persistent pain. More recently there have been great strides in beginning to understand the complex physiological and psychological processes that cause pain to persist outside of normal healing times. Whilst new and interesting management options are being developed, persistent pain can result in significant mental health concerns for those experiencing it. Thanks to new research, we now know that our thoughts, emotions and perceptions of pain can all impact the severity and management of the pain. Understanding that feelings of anxiety or depression may be stressors and triggers to pain is important in the treatment process.

For some great insights into some of the important developments from a physiotherapist's perspective, read more here, but management of persistent pain is a multidisciplinary approach and there are many strategies that your psychologist can help you employ to help take control of your pain.

Common psychological interventions that may help manage your pain include:

· Assessment of a patient's psychological experience of pain

· Psychoeducation can help you understand how the brain, your thoughts and moods can affect pain and injury

· Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) can help to reframe unhelpful beliefs and thought processes surrounding your pain, and to develop new coping strategies.

· Self-management skills such as teaching mindfulness and relaxation strategies

If you feel you may benefit from a modern interdisciplinary approach to your pain, please contact Sarah James at www.sarahjamespsychology.com.au.

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