

**Hawaiian Rehab
Services, Inc.**

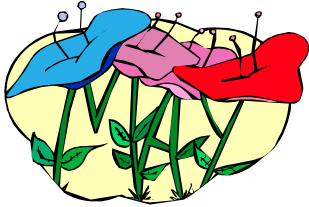
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Hawaiian Rehab News

**Spring
2013**



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Chronic Pain by Brendan Alex, DPT

Chronic pain takes on many different forms. It may appear as chronic low back pain or leg pain following a stroke. It may be diagnosed as chronic regional pain syndrome or osteoarthritis. While all of these symptoms and diagnoses are different, research has found they all have one thing in common; they all involve neuroplastic or reorganizational changes in the brain and nervous system.

These changes include sensitization of spinal nociceptors which contribute to a condition known as central sensitization. This causes patients to experience hyperalgesia and allodynia with increased sensitivity that occurs throughout the body, not just adjacent to the initial pain site. In these patients, merely seeing a picture of a painful extremity being touched can cause swelling and pain of their own extremity.

Additionally, changes have been found in the primary and sensory and motor cortices of the brain. For example, individuals with chronic hand pain display a decreased ability to differentiate whether a picture they are shown displays a right or left hand. Improving patient's ability to make this differentiation can decrease

pain to the hand. Continuing research in this area is now attempting to determine whether a similar phenomenon occurs in individuals which chronic low back and neck pain, and if they are too unable to distinguish in a picture, whether a person is rotating their neck or back to the left or right.

Perhaps one of the most noticeable changes in individuals with chronic pain is the loss of control they experience in their ability to manage pain. They often feel helpless and as if the pain is completely controlling their life. The pain begins to define who they are, and their life becomes severely limited by it.

While research on this topic as well as potential interventions are relatively new and ongoing, patients suffering from chronic pain benefit significantly from a variety of therapeutic approaches. These approaches can be as simple as increasing the patient's self efficacy in order to reduce feelings of helplessness, as well as physical activity modification in an effort to slowly increase pain-free activity tolerance. Novel treatment approaches exist as well, such as graded motor imagery.

This involves a three step process which includes left/right discrimination, imagined movements, and mirror therapy. Lastly studies indicate pain physiology education alone leads to a reduction in chronic pain.

Patients with chronic pain tend to be among the most difficult patients to treat, as many medical professionals do not feel they know where to begin. Therapists are uniquely trained to address these limitations with patients benefiting significantly.

Moseley, 2012. Targeting Cortical Representations in the Treatment of Chronic Pain



*ACUPUNCTURE is now covered by AlohaCare Advantage for our Medicare eligible patients

Locally Grown Chinese Medicinal Herbs by Paul Thompson, LAc.

Due to the Hawaii Island's diverse climatic conditions, countless botanical varieties are grown here including many plants that are part of the Chinese materia medica. Ginger, tumeric, and aloe vera are used by many local people to restore and maintain health. Some less well known medicinal plant products include honeysuckle, loquat leaf, lobelia, and finger citron fruit. The finger citron fruit is a personal favorite of our acupuncturist, as the fresh or dried fruit treats morning sickness, and helps stop vomiting. Finger citron has the appearance that lends to its literal name of Buddha's hand. Enjoying these herbs in your gardens and kitchens enriches this paradise even further.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Chronic Pain	1
Locally Grown Chinese	1
HRS Update	2
Staff Update	2
Insurance Update	2
Clinic Update	2

HRS Update

We are now completing our plans to increase coverage in Waikoloa and Waimea. We have added another PT position in Kamuela. Please see our profile section. Phil Sauer, PT, is now seeing patient 3 full days per week in Waikoloa and we hope to increase this to 4 days in the near future. We have 3 PTs in Waimea with specialists in orthopedics, women's health/incontinence, lymphadema, aquatics, foot orthotics and neurological diagnoses. Kamuela is also available to provide PT services for children birth to 3 yrs of age through the North Hawaii Child Development Program/Family Support Services of West Hawaii.



Clinic Update

HRS will be changing our telephone system, effective late April, which will allow all the clinics to be connected. The patients calling a clinic will not encounter a voice mail or busy signal if the staff is with patients. They will be transferred to our other clinics to speak with someone right away. Our electronic scheduling program has been implemented in Kona and will be added to Kamuela and Waikoloa so that any patient for any clinic can check on their schedule or reschedule much easier. All of our claims will soon be submitted electronically by April, including attachments for treatment records/reports. We hope to transition to EHR within 2013, but CMS has not provided incentives to rehabilitation providers and we hope to avoid jumping into the arena before some of the "glitches" are fixed.



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Insurance Update

Our patient numbers on government plans, including Medicare, Quest and Medicaid programs have been increasing, which is of concern, because the payments are generally low with Quest patients. In addition, compliance can be a problem because of lack of transportation, childcare, or other personal issues. We are working with our national associations to lobby for better fees, eliminating annual caps for coverage, etc. We now accept most mainland Medicare Advantage plans as well Kaiser Senior Advantage, AlohaCare Advantage, Humana, Secure Horizon, and Aetna. Keeping our aging population active and healthy is a priority. Since Physical and Occupational Therapists can see patients directly without a referral, we will evaluate a patient who requests services, send a treatment plan to the primary care physician when appropriate. We will coordinate care to minimize unnecessary, duplicative or unneeded services, and keep the patient living safely in their own home.

Staff Update

Madeline Sofranac, PT, DPT, joined our staff in February 2013. She graduated from Northern Arizona University in May, 2012, Madeline brings to HRS a special interest in the neurologically involved patients and has worked extensively with Parkinson's patients. She also has experience with orthopedic patients, especially with aquatic therapy. When not involved in the clinic, Madeline enjoys hiking, farming, and water sports. Welcome Madeline.



Continuing Ed

Madeline Sofranac, PT, DPT

Pelvic Restoration: An Integrated Approach to Treatment of Patterned Pubo-Sacral Pathomechanics

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