

Suffering and Culture

Rydal Hall, near Ambleside, Cumbria, 28th June to 1st July 2010



Are there limits beyond which pain is intolerable and unacceptable?

- Culture and belief can have a profound influence on the experience of pain as well as its expression.
- Can we understand patients' narratives without taking culture into account?
- Are we sufficiently well informed about cultures other than our own?
- Does ignorance of others' culture (or lack of awareness of our own cultural background) influence our clinical attitudes and our assessment and treatment of patients?
- Does cultural acceptance of suffering in parts of the world denied adequate pain relief absolve us from our responsibilities in this regard?



Free Papers

These are warmly invited on any subject (relevant to the above or not) not normally adequately covered in conventional scientific and clinical meetings, but which may give rise to perplexity or anxiety. Accounts of clinical cases and other situations giving rise to ethical and other dilemmas will be particularly welcome. The important thing is to provoke debate. **There is no fixed deadline for submissions but an early response would be much appreciated to aid planning** (and will save much anxiety!). There is no need to provide a formal abstract, a brief outline will suffice.

Outline Programme

The fixed points are arrival in time for supper at 6.30 p.m. on Monday 28th June and departure after lunch on Thursday 1st July; the theme of 'culture' will occupy Tuesday, and that of 'intolerable pain' Wednesday morning. The rest of the programme will be devoted to free papers. In general the intention is to devote at least half of the time to discussion. The afternoons of Tuesday and Wednesday (between lunch and tea) will be free for walking in the glorious surrounding countryside and other recreation. There will be daily Tai Chi sessions for early risers.

Accommodation

Some sharing of double rooms may be necessary. Please indicate on the application form if there is anyone you would particularly wish to share with, or if you feel have a strong priority for a single (or ground floor or wheelchair accessible) room. Beds may be available for accompanying partners or family if number of applicants permits. Rooms may be available for the night of Thursday July 1st for anyone wanting to stay on for a more extended walk or other excursion during the afternoon. (£56 for dinner, B and B) Please apply directly to Rydal Hall for this as soon as possible as they may wish to book them for other guests.

Prompt application is earnestly requested. Availability of accommodation cannot be guaranteed after March 21st 2010

Venue

Rydal Hall is a comfortable and elegant historical house in the heart of the Lake District, set in 30 acres of beautiful gardens and woodland and commanding a magnificent view. It is ideally situated for both gentle and adventurous walking. It is about a mile north of Ambleside on the A591. Full travel information will be provided in the final programme.

(Tel: 01539 432050 , email bookings@rydalhall.org website www.rydalhall.org)

Registration Fees

The differential fee is intended to reflect widening differences between incomes of consultants and GP's and others, and cutting of study leave budgets. We are anxious that no-one should be excluded for financial reasons and depending on numbers of applicants, it may be possible to offer a further concession to those on small incomes who cannot obtain study leave payment. Unfortunately however this cannot be guaranteed.

Submissions for presentations, suggestions for topics to be covered, and any queries, to:

Dr Peter Wemyss-Gorman

peter.gorman@matmosonline.co.uk

Tel 01444 483835

Lyndhurst, Hickmans Lane, Lindfield , West Sussex RH17 2PX

Suffering and Culture

Registration Form

Rydal Hall, near Ambleside, Cumbria,

28th June to 1st July 2010

Title

First name

Surname

Address

Post Code

Email

Daytime Tel

Post held

Place of work

Dietary requirements

Intending to present a paper

Yes No

Special request for single room

Yes No

Would like to share with

Would like to bring partner or family

Yes No

Names:

Registration Fees	before 21/03/10	After 21/03/10
Consultants and GP's	£320	£350
Others	£220	£240
Accompanying guests	£200	£200

to cover accommodation, all meals and use of conference facilities.

I enclose a cheque, payable to the British Pain Society, for the sum of

£

Please debit my credit card (Visa/MasterCard/JCB) or Switch/Solo (circle as applicable), for the sum of

£

Cardholder's name
(please print)

Card number

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

(Switch Only) □□□□

Issue no. (if on card) □□

Valid from □□/□□ Expiry date □□/□□

Card Security Code □□□ (the last 3 digits on back of card)

House number □□□

Postcode □□□□□□□ where credit card is registered.

Signed (Participant)

Date

TRUST/EMPLOYER INVOICES

If your Trust/employer is paying for your registration fees, and you require an invoice to be sent directly to them, please provide full invoice details below. Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that your Trust/employer pays for your fees.

Contact name

Contact address (including department)

Contact telephone number

There is a great temptation to view and interpret the pain and suffering of others from our own cultural viewpoint. For modern Western doctors this has been heavily influenced by the biomedical model. The physiological mechanisms underlying pain perception are the same in all humans so surely the experience of pain must be the same? There are obvious differences in the behavioural responses to pain between different national and racial groups, but these can be dismissed as 'superficial', and judged by our own standards: in northern Europe we tend to admire stoicism and rather look down on demonstrative expression of pain.

But these attitudes are clearly simplistic, and if we are to fully understand our patients' pain narratives we cannot ignore the role of culture and the ways in which not only our behaviour but our view of the meaning of suffering and how we respond to it emotionally are inherited, through language, symbols and religion, from our national and cultural forebears. If we are to be 'culturally competent' we must not only be educated about this but also be well informed about the cultural characteristics of other groups; and perhaps even more importantly be aware of the cultural origins of our own attitudes and how these may influence our treatment of our patients.

We will be guided in the search for better understanding of the role of culture by Dr Jonathan Koffman, Lecturer in Palliative Care, Kings College London, who will explore the question: 'The experience and expression of pain: does ethnicity and culture make a difference?' and Dr Simon Dein, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology and Medicine, UCL, who will talk about 'The Anthropology of Pain: Linking Culture and Physiology'

Many cultures and religions encourage acceptance of suffering. In parts of the world where medical pain relief is elusive or unobtainable cultural attitudes to pain have of necessity evolved to help accept and cope with it. But does this allow us in the affluent world to accept the situation and absolve us of any responsibility to do something about it? Professor Sir Michael Bond, former president of the IASP, will address this question in his talk on Pain Education and Management in the Developing World.

On day two, continuing the theme of acceptance, Bobbie Farsides, Professor of Clinical and Biomedical Ethics at the Brighton and Sussex Medical School, will speak on 'Tolerance, Pain and Suffering : the responsibilities of sufferers', exploring the question of intolerable suffering and asking if there limits beyond which pain is neither tolerable nor acceptable, not only in the context of palliative care but also in the much more difficult area of chronic pain.

The remainder of the meeting will be devoted to presentations from participants on these and other subjects (see Free Papers), as well as the opportunity for physical and mental recreation afforded by the situation of Rydal Hall in one of the loveliest landscapes in England. The format of the meeting is designed to maximise discussion, and some of the most fruitful conversations take place outside the debating room and indeed on the fells!

Enquiries

Please direct any enquiries or problems to:

Peter Gorman

peter.gorman@matmosonline.co.uk

Telephone 01444 483835

Mobile 07743702065

