

PAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The SWSAHS Pain Service based at Liverpool Hospital is a multidisciplinary service, providing chronic pain services for persistent malignant and non-malignant pain and acute pain. Education and research are also an important component of the Service.

Significant numbers of the population are affected by chronic pain in SWSAHS. In 1997, there were approximately 111,340 people in SWSAHS who reported having chronic pain for greater than three months during the six months prior to being surveyed¹. In 2003 there were 6,500 occasions of care for acute pain in inpatient settings, and 132 occasions of care in patients with chronic pain reported for Liverpool Hospital. These figures include in-hospital consultations in addition to patients admitted specifically for pain management. There were 743 outpatient occasions of service in 2003 including 89 procedures.

In 2006, at 85% occupancy and assuming no change in flow patterns, it is projected that there will be a need for approximately 2.5 beds for adult pain management.

Current Service

Bankstown Hospital provides an acute pain service through the Anaesthetic Department. At Bowral, Campbelltown, Camden and Fairfield Hospitals, the attending anaesthetist provides follow up for acute pain.

The SWSAHS multidisciplinary pain service based at Liverpool Hospital consists of:

- A chronic pain service for persistent malignant and non-malignant pain. A multidisciplinary approach to managing pain has been proven to be cost effective and the best way to manage chronic persistent pain, supported by Level II research²; and
- An acute pain service, assisted by the anaesthetic department.

Pain Management clinical staffing comprises a half time psychologist, half time physiotherapist, 1.5 FTE CNC, 1.5 FTE registered nurses and 1 VMO.

The patient process through the multidisciplinary Chronic Pain Service includes:

- Triage, where initial referrals are triaged by nursing staff using criteria;
- Multidisciplinary assessment by a medical specialist, clinical psychologist, physiotherapist and occupational therapist. Each initial assessment takes 4 hours; and
- Multidiscipline group discussion and development of an individual treatment plan.

Treatment in the Pain Management Centre may involve:

- Follow up consultations by pain specialist and allied health team; and
- Allied health services e.g. Back Care and Acupuncture Clinic.

The multidisciplinary management program for chronic pain outpatients is a six-week course with up to ten outpatients per group. All patients must be fully assessed by team prior admission to course and there is a follow up assessment six and twelve months after completion of the program. Four courses or programs are run each year

Some patients require procedures to assist with pain management. This can be undertaken as an inpatient, day patient or outpatient. Procedures include insertion and removal of pumps, intrathecal testing, infusions, nerve blocks, Port-A-Caths and/or injections.

¹NSW Health Survey, 1997

²National Health and Medical Research Council 1998

Acute Pain Service

The acute pain service plays an important role in minimising the risks of complications caused by ineffective pain relief following surgery, therefore, achieving a rapid discharge from hospital and potential savings for the health care system. Early intervention by the acute pain service helps prevent development of chronic pain syndromes.

Acute pain rounds are Monday to Saturday, attended by an anaesthetic registrar and a pain management nurse. A pain specialist attends rounds for 1.5 hours three times a fortnight. Sunday rounds are attended by the Anaesthetic Registrar.

Education

Education is delivered by teleconference or 'face-to-face' with individuals, small groups or conferences. In 2003, the Liverpool service organised three conferences that were attended by medical, nursing and allied staff. Education sessions were also delivered to nursing, medical and allied health professionals at Liverpool and other hospitals in SWSAHS, to community services and to GPs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- An Area Pain Service be fully developed with the central unit located at Liverpool Hospital.
- A Medical Director for the Area Pain Service be appointed.
- Anaesthetic Departments in Campbelltown, Fairfield, Bankstown and Bowral to provide acute pain services across the Area whilst chronic pain be managed by the Pain Service. The Pain Service will manage both acute and chronic pain services at Liverpool.