



Chronic pain treatments and spinal cord stimulation key topics for international pain meeting

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The debilitating chronic pain condition fibromyalgia, opioid addiction and new developments in spinal cord stimulation are some of the topical issues to be explored by Australia and New Zealand's leading pain specialty body at its annual pain medicine symposium this weekend.

The Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM) of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) is meeting in Kuala Lumpur for its Annual FPM Symposium on Sunday April 28 with 120 delegates, including Malaysian specialist pain medicine physicians attending.

The Pain at the Interface meeting being held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre features Australian, New Zealand and international speakers presenting on a wide range of topics including opioids, chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder and new developments in spinal cord stimulation.

Experts will also discuss treatments for fibromyalgia including collaborative approaches between rheumatology, psychiatry, addiction medicine and pain medicine. Fibromyalgia is an often misdiagnosed chronic condition that affects between two and eight per cent of people worldwide and many of those living with the condition are women.

International speakers include Associate Professor Chad Brummett, Director of Pain Research at the University of Michigan who will reveal how researchers are working on developing a diagnostic measure to assess pain so treatment can be better tailored to individual patients.

Sydney interventional pain physician and anaesthetist Dr James Yu will tell the meeting that while the use of spinal cord stimulation for pain relief has been available for nearly 50 years "technological advances in spinal cord stimulation represent some of the most exciting developments in pain management."

Another US speaker, Dr Lawrence Poree, Director of the Neuromodulation Service at the University of California, will explore future developments in pain management technology (neuromodulation) devices to help patients manage their chronic pain.

The Dean of the Faculty of Pain Medicine, Dr Meredith Craigie said this year's meeting had brought together delegates from a range of specialties, reflecting the multi-disciplinary membership of the faculty.

Pain medicine is a two year post-specialty qualification for doctors, including GPs, psychiatrists, rehabilitation specialists, physicians, anaesthetists and surgeons.

"The 2019 meeting is an important opportunity for Australian, New Zealand, US and Malaysian specialist pain medicine physicians to not only explore and debate the latest research on chronic pain but consider how we can combine our knowledge and expertise to improve patient treatment and care," Dr Craigie explained.

"Chronic pain affects about one in five people and costs \$A73.2 billion each year including \$A48.3 billion in lost productivity so it is vital that we not only work with our patients to help them manage their pain but also help educate the community about pain and how it is treated."

Pain medicine specialists serve both as a consultant to other physicians and are often the principal treating physician. The spectrum of care provided by a pain medicine specialist includes co-

ordinating rehabilitation services, counselling patients and their families, directing multi-disciplinary teams, liaising with other health care professionals and reviewing and adjusting medication.