



Book Review

Explain Pain

by **David Butler & Lorimer Moseley**

This book fills a gaping hole in the public and clinical literature about pain. The authors have made an ambitious attempt to present scientific research from across pain sciences in an easy-to-understand and entertaining manner. The book is in landscape format and is bound in way that makes it easy to sit on your lap and work through with patients. The pictures are excellent, original and eye-catching, albeit sometimes unconventional and the text is written in a conversational manner without compromising the scientific integrity of the material.

The first (of six) sections tells some fascinating stories and discusses general concepts. The next section focuses on the nervous system, introducing receptors, nociceptors, action potentials, synaptic transmission and brain mechanisms involved in pain. Complex neuroscience is presented in a way that seems logical and easy to grasp. Section 3: "Issues in the tissues" deals with inflammation, muscle, discs, skin, bone and joint problems, peripheral nerve problems and the dorsal root ganglion. Section 4 presents the physiologic and psychosocial mechanisms involved in chronic pain including central sensitisation and cortical reorganisation, catastrophising, doctor-shopping and fear. The impact and effect of changes in autonomic, motor, immune and endocrine function are also discussed. Sections 5 and 6 present established models for management and key principles for exercise and rehabilitation and include anecdotes and metaphors that are excellent for patients and clinicians alike.

*Throughout the book there is both acknowledgement of pain patients' suffering and an emphasis on the protective, albeit disruptive nature of the changes that occur. These themes reveal the influence of eminent pain science thinkers such as Ronald Melzack and Patrick Wall. **Explain Pain** is probably aimed at patients but will be a great resource for clinicians and pain management programs because it provides a comprehensive and understandable account of physiology and psychology. This may be the only book of its kind and although the early chapters are slow in advancing the story, there are important points conveyed. This is a great book and the authors are to be congratulated.*

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