

Book Reviews

Explain Pain

Butler DS, Moseley GL. Noigroup Publications, 2003, Softcover, 129pp. illus. ISBN 0 9750910 0 X (RRP: AU\$77.00)

The title of Butler and Moseley's new book is a giveaway for its' contents. In 'Explain Pain' the authors aim to help health professionals understand current concepts in pain neurobiology, as well as to help them understand how to convey this information to patients. Further, modern models of management are presented with a view to assist people in pain, and their practitioners, in making the best choices to help them overcome pain and regain optimum function.

Although patients are amongst the intended audience, I think it is safe to say that practitioners and students would derive immense benefit from reading, and using this resource. Not only do the authors present complex concepts and physiology in simple and memorable language, they also manage to deliver the material in a clinically useful way. The information should have immediate application in clinical practice, as does the book itself in terms of a patient education resource.

Butler and Moseley provide a comprehensive discussion of the literature given the books intended purpose. In fact, one could anticipate that any patient who had read this book is likely to have a better understanding of pain science than many health care professionals. The information is up-to-date, and the authors cite references as recent as 2003 (as well as some that are currently in press). However, it is not a textbook, and those readers who are interested in more depth should consult Butler's excellent text, *The Sensitive Nervous System* (Noigroup Publications, 2000).

Importantly, the authors stand behind their aim to educate patients. Lorimer Moseley is a Research Fellow with the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council and research physiotherapist at the University of Queensland. He has conducted and published formal research confirming that modern concepts and knowledge of "pain can be easily understood by men and women in the street".

The book is well-written and the use of creative analogies is helpful. I have read, and understood, numerous books and articles on current pain neurobiology; however, I now feel I have a better understanding of these concepts, especially as they relate to clinical practice.

The book is organized into six sections. The first section introduces the reader to the wonderful world of pain processing by way of a number of 'amazing pain stories' - the type that make you go 'huh...now what's going on there'?

Sections two, three and four introduce readers to the basic players in the perception of pain. The insights are not related

to which tissues contain nociceptive afferents, but how this nociceptive information is processed by nerve terminals, peripheral neurons, the spinal cord, brainstem and cortex.

Section five outlines modern management models. However, the focus is on general coping strategies, rather than specific manual therapy techniques. In fact, it would be wise for Osteopaths who associate 'nerve stretching techniques' and 'David Butler' to dismantle this superficial association. Butler, who has become a bit of a 'technique guru' in terms of neural mobilization techniques, has moved beyond this 'technique based' typecast and is now sitting in the camp of central nervous system pain processing, without being limited by an over-emphasis on one particular type of tissue or technique.

The artwork in the book could lead one to say that the figures are complemented by text rather than the other way around. I am no art critic, however I am quite prepared to say that the images (by Sunyata) capture the essence of the text and achieve the aim of explaining pain. Also, the book comes spiral bound, so that it can be laid out completely without destroying the binding.

I'm hard pressed to find something to criticize about the book, besides the odd typographical error. In fact, I can't think of any practitioner who deals with pain who shouldn't read and use this book. It is available online at www.noigroup.com

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Positional Release Technique: From a Dynamic Systems Perspective

Deig D. Butterworth Heinemann. 2000, Hardcover, 229pp.illus. (b&w) ISBN 0-7506-7225-0 (RRP: AU\$145.75; GBPE 48.49)

In this practical manual Denise Deig integrates her formal training in physical therapy and psychology with other influences to create a fusion technique which allows a more holistic and feminist approach to indirect body work beyond merely changing muscle function. Those influences include Ortho-Bionomy, Strain-Counterstrain, Osteopathic Functional Technique, and Feldenkrais. Her preface and the forewords by colleagues promise much, and in my estimation the book largely delivers.

The text opens with an introduction to the theory and history of indirect osteopathic techniques and Dynamic Systems Theory, which many osteopaths will recognise as modern holistic clinical practice as opposed to reductionist approaches. It then moves on to cover in-depth evaluation of the patient and other treatment considerations.