

## It's Not Enough To Utilize Just One Medical Discipline To Treat Pain

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How chronic pain is being treated is evolving all around the world. Treating symptoms, and patients waiting for long periods for one specific treatment, are really no longer viable and effective options for addressing the problem. However, employing a multidisciplinary approach to pain treatment allows healthcare professionals to address the pain in a tailored manner that also effectively address the underlying issue. The way that chronic pain is being treated is changing all around the world. A staggering 37% of people in developed countries are recorded as suffering from chronic pain. Treating symptoms and patients waiting for long periods for a specific treatment are not viable options for addressing the problem. A multidisciplinary approach allows healthcare professionals to deliver tailored treatment plans to patients that provide pain relief or effectively address the underlying issue.

**Impacts Of Chronic Pain:** For sufferers of chronic pain, there are numerous physical, emotional, psychological and societal impacts on everyday living. A chronic pain patient may experience some level of disability due to an injury or medical condition. Each patient is different, so while there is a reasonable expectation of disability associated with particular injuries or conditions, dealing with those disabilities is still a very personal experience. Some of the impacts that a chronic pain patient may experience include a lower quality of life, depression and anxiety. These are psychological impacts that cannot be addressed using a methodology that dictates how each patient should approach his or her treatment and recovery. By employing multidisciplinary treatment for chronic pain, patients are treated as individuals and have all their needs addressed. Conversely, patients who receive treatment plans that focus solely on one aspect of recovery are left to deal with a range of other problems without treatment.

**Multidisciplinary Treatment Plans:** As a strategy for addressing chronic pain, multidisciplinary treatment plans target a number of areas at once. Traditionally, a patient would receive treatment for physical injuries and conditions before being referred to other specialists upon request. There are many issues with the latter approach to treatment from the perspective of both medical professionals and patients. When patients are left to seek other specialist treatment, they are less likely to follow up on the suggested action. For those who do, treatment involves being pushed from pillar to post. Optimally, professionals should be providing multidisciplinary treatment plans in the same facility. This methodology results in several key benefits for patients. Each patient receives a tailored treatment plan as well as support on their path to recovery. A multidisciplinary treatment plan should address the cause, symptoms and related impacts of chronic pain.

**Health And Wellness:** Another aspect of chronic pain that can be resolved through multidisciplinary treatment is the health and wellness of patients. When a patient is generally unhealthy or suffering from emotional or mental health problems, recovery is significantly harder. A multidisciplinary approach may include treatment options such as acupuncture, chiropractic and electrotherapy to minimize discomfort from pain. The team at the Allied Pain & Spine Institute believes that multidisciplinary treatment is about effectively diagnosing the patient and finding the right combination of treatments to promote recovery or provide relief from chronic pain. It has been proven that building core strength and doing exercise that is tailored to the patient's needs promotes healing and recovery. A patient cannot achieve relief until he or she is given the opportunity to pursue a treatment plan that is tailored and specific to their experience of chronic pain. That's why, while certain issues may need to be addressed through outside specialists, a multidisciplinary treatment plan typically delivered in a single facility is a superior approach.

**Focus Treatment Approached From Multiple Angles:** Traditionally, in medicine, treatment is focused; meaning that a patient may not have access to all available options. A patient with chronic back or joint pain could spend a significant period on a waiting list for a procedure that isn't necessarily the correct long-term approach. Invasive surgeries are often the last resort for patients and can result in complications. Chronic pain is a complex area of medicine and merits an approach that takes all factors into consideration when offering patients treatment. The multidisciplinary approach is aimed toward complete recovery or relief from pain. A specialist may diagnose a condition and create a treatment plan that is effective. However, if the patient is compelled to attend numerous different medical professionals such as physiotherapists and rehabilitation therapists, the patient will need to explain his or her other treatment options and progress during each session.

**Innovation And Education:** A facility that offers multidisciplinary treatment should value innovation and education. Part of the reason that waiting lists are so long is because so many patients are being referred for specific treatments that have traditionally been used to treat chronic pain. However, we must embrace innovation, so we can offer patients the latest and proven treatment options. Innovations including minimally invasive spinal and joint surgeries are fast replacing invasive and complex surgeries that can have long-term negative impacts for patients. Patient education is also important when discussing multidisciplinary treatment. Chronic pain is a symptom that derives from complex issues that aren't necessarily linked directly to a primary injury. Secondary pain can arise from the patient's activities and everyday environment. These challenges are unique to each patient and so the provider of multidisciplinary treatment must also tailor education.

**Multidisciplinary Adaptability In Treatment:** The overarching methodology of multidisciplinary treatment is adaptability during treatment. When traditional forms of treatment fail, it is largely due to stagnation and the inability to offer patients alternative treatment options. The ultimate benefit of multidisciplinary medicine is in the continuing effort to provide solutions to chronic pain to every patient. The answers lie in treating each patient as a whole person rather than just a symptom. I am proud to be at the forefront of providing multidisciplinary treatment and will continue to explore ways of offering patients effective relief from chronic pain.