

Pain and Pain Management in the U of M Medical Curriculum 11/07

Pain management is a topic that is learned in an interdisciplinary context throughout the four year curriculum. This includes formal lectures, case-based small group discussions, patient presentations, standardized patient instructors and clinical conferences. A partial list of examples are described below:

Basic anatomy, physiology and therapeutic approaches to pain treatment are covered during the first and second year. This includes formal presentations on; pain pathways, use of local and general anesthetics and narcotics, assessment and management of headache, spine/root/nerve lesions associated with pain. Specific topics also include fibromyalgia, central pain, pain associated with labor and delivery, addiction and socio-cultural issues related to pain.

Approach to the patient with chest pain, abdominal pain, musculoskeletal pain including back pain, headache etc. are formally covered in our clinical skills courses.

Impact of pain on patients and patient's perception of pain are introduced in both patient presentations (e.g. patient with cancer) and case based discussions during the first through third years.

Students are also introduced to the principles of complementary and alternative therapy in pain management (e.g. acupuncture, chiropractic, mind-body and massage therapy).

Family Medicine Clerkship: a required patient presentation and demonstration on low back pain by faculty including introduction to UM low back pain clinical guidelines. Three patient case discussion sessions that include examples of chronic and acute pain (e.g., abdominal pain, pelvic pain, low back pain, and headache).

Neurology Clerkship: formal learning objectives and presentations include how to evaluate and manage a number of conditions including headache and back pain