



Foreword

Pain in Rheumatic Diseases



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Consulting Editor

Dr Maripat Corr has put together a remarkable “theme” issue about pain, a real tour de force! Since pain is what distinguishes our patients from almost all other disciplines and specialties and in most cases also drives our clinical and therapeutic decisions, we appreciate the opportunity to receive this information in order to understand the complex nature of pain in rheumatic diseases. The conditions we deal with are also challenging since even in a single patient there may be more than one pain mechanism or experience. Dr Corr tells us that the research efforts, contained herein, are an attempt to unravel the various pain mechanisms among which are tissue inflammation and damage, nerve damage, and central sensitization. The drugs that we use to target these areas are often accompanied by an incomplete understanding of the mechanism of action of many of them. Dr Corr chose to develop articles with specificity toward the more common rheumatic diseases, such as osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, and systemic lupus erythematosus. Our often empiric approaches to pain in these diseases have driven us to employ management strategies that clearly are in advance of our understanding of the mechanisms involved, including the role of cell signaling, pain pathways, and innate immune networks. The conundrum of central pain sensitization is discussed with the appropriate clinical strategies regarding management as well as diagnosis. Finally, there is the issue of pain management for conditions that are defined by pain itself; we have been challenged by the use of opiates and cannabinoids that become part of the polypharmacy related to comorbid conditions that by themselves may be part of the problem. As our tools have grown to engage new research opportunities, so have the clinical insights provided by our

authors and Dr Corr that are in evidence from this remarkable, timely, and very welcome issue.

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