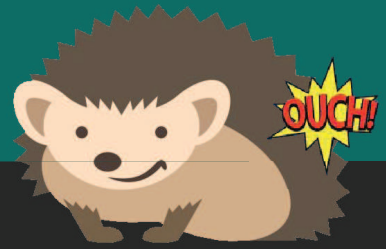




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“Pain management”

with Paul McLaughlin from Royal Free Hospital in London, UK

THE ROLE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY IN PAIN MANAGEMENT

What is the role of physiotherapy in both acute and chronic pain?

I would say that the role of physiotherapy is before the pain. Before the pain part of my role as a physiotherapist is to help you – person with haemophilia – to understand my understanding of your body, why things work and why things may be painful or not be painful.

Also, **our role is to build every-day strategies of what to do in certain situations**, e.g. joint bleed, so that you can get some control over the situation.

For chronic pain, or the pain that is becoming chronic or long-standing, **our role is to figure out together with the patient what are their good days and what are their bad days.** What is the difference between them? Why are they having good days and why are they having bad days? Sometimes it may be because of the activity – one has done too much and gets a normal inflammatory flare. As physiotherapist I can then say that it is not dangerous and there is not further joint damage.

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I see it as a discussion, because it helps to be able to understand what is going on together. For example, the patient realises that he is always worse on a Monday, because he works at a desk from Monday to Friday, and then goes crazy on a golf course on the weekend. That is why his

ankles are worse. In the same time, I am able to say that this sign is inflammatory and advise him that if he is going to play golf on Saturday and Sunday, why not take an anti-inflammatory medication on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to stop the flare up on Monday.

That is pattern recognition where there may be various reasons - pharmacology, better footwear or many other things.

Or it can be the other way around- sometimes you just cannot tell why you have pain. We as health care professionals always want to find the source of pain, e.g. joint bleed, because we want to help and you as patients want a diagnosis. And then it is important to accept that one has pain with no obvious cause to be able to move on in treatment. To deny that someone has pain with no obvious cause is not helpful at all. Pain is pain, and if you say that you have pain, you have pain. And then we try to figure out, if we can change or alter any of these other things that may improve. And clearly physiotherapist cannot do this all by him/herself – that is why it is so important to have the multidisciplinary care around the PWI.

Occasionally we see people with horrible arthritis and no pain. That is why it is so important to have an overall view.

For acute pain it may be haematologist, factor and pain medication, but for chronic pain certainly not.

For acute pain it may be that haematologist, factor and pain medication are enough, but for chronic pain certainly not.

I experience daily the stuck joint problem. It is very frightening. Could you give some indication on what can one do in such a situation?

It is very difficult. My patient that I talked about was in the shower when his elbow got locked, and he was panicking and went 5 steps ahead of what might happen. **My advice would be to bear in mind what is happening at that moment in your body.**

Usually it is a bone fragment that is stuck between the two joint bones, and it is very acute and sharp pain, and you cannot move your joint.

We always try to encourage patients to stay as calm as possible and to get into a safe position if you are able to (sitting down, or propping yourself up against something), and to try and see if you can wait for 30 seconds or one minute if it passes and whether or not the muscle spasm can subside. The muscle spasm is normal – it is protective.

For the elbows, with the other arm you can sometimes do some gentle pulling techniques that help release the joint.

When it is transient – very painful and then it passes – then I would suggest to practice staying as calm as possible and thinking that you know what this is and that you have had this before, and that you know that it will pass. Talk yourself slightly calmer and then get yourself into a position of comfort.

Vicious circle of haemophilia

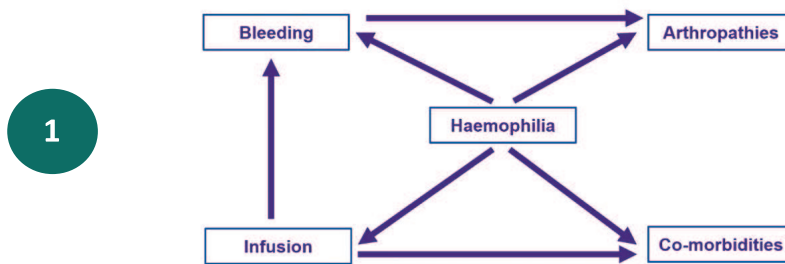
There is something called vicious circle of haemophilia. We can see that after a bleed the pain starts affecting the function of the joint, irrespective of the arthritis. You might always have had arthritis, but after you get more pain from a bleed your function for that moment goes down. Even though your arthritis has not got worse in that particular moment. The ability to cope with the pain at that particular moment has gotten worse. If that happens a lot, it becomes quite stressful.

You have missed time from work or from school, you end up not being able to play golf on a Saturday. **This means that you start missing out on things that you like to do, and that actually adds to the pain response, because now you are angry and annoyed about the fact that you have pain.** Then when you get the pain next time, you are already angry and annoyed, and your quality of life starts to be affected. This vicious circle can happen very quickly, in couple of days.

For example, you have a joint bleed, you get acute pain that affects your function. You are forced to miss two days of work, which means- if you are self-employed- less money that week to buy things that support your quality of life. Or it can happen over two years, or ten years. It comes and goes, but spirals downward. **Because pain comes with lot of other stuff and it is really hard to concentrate on things, when your brain is focused on pain.**

The vicious circle of haemophilia

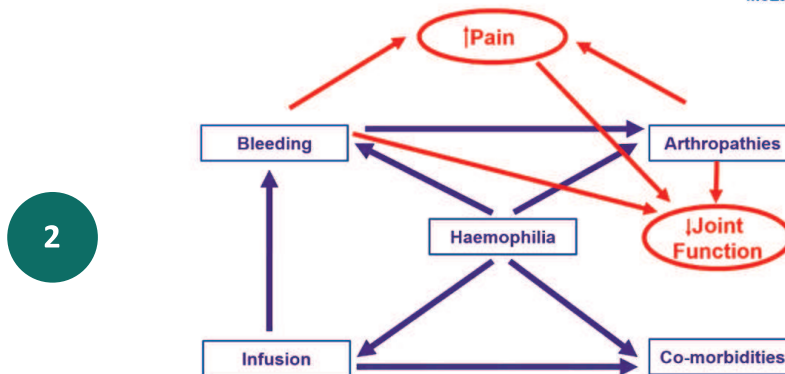
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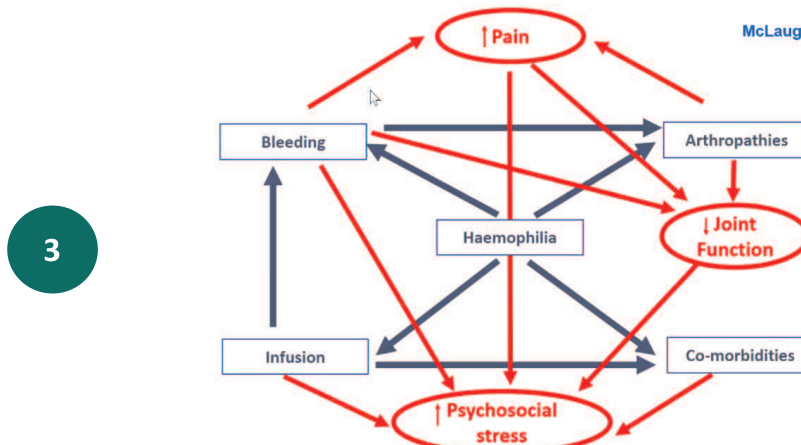
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