Core Curriculum for Professional Education in Pain, Third Edition
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J. Edmond Charlton (ed.)
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Core Curriculum for Professional Education in Pain, edited by J. Edmond Charlton and published by the International Association for the Study of Pain Press, offers a framework for curriculum planning and independent study in Pain Medicine.

The recently released third edition notably expands and updates the core curriculum with contributions from 87 authors, a nearly 40% increase in the international panel of contributors—representing fields of nursing, addiction recovery, pain research, anatomy and developmental biology, palliative care, epidemiology, pharmacology, rheumatology, neurology, urology, public health service, among others. To parallel the increase in number of contributing authors, new topics are now included in the Core Curriculum. Those that stand out include cultural aspects of pain, sex and gender issues of pain, work rehabilitation and complementary therapies, pain relief in substance abusers, children, and individuals with limited ability to communicate.

This edition offers an organized grouping of the 45 topics into four parts: the first part contains general topics such as anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, research design, animal models and ethical standards. Part 2 focuses on assessment and psychology of pain including new sections on sex and gender issues in pain, work rehabilitation and complementary therapies, pain relief in substance abusers, children, and individuals with limited ability to communicate. The third part separates treatments into pharmacological and other methods. The final part includes clinical states categorized into subsections of taxonomy, tissue pain, visceral pain, headache and facial pain, nerve damage and special cases.

The text remains in the familiar outline format of previous editions. The new format for this edition’s table of contents is easily readable and makes this edition much more navigable than previous editions. This is important as the book does not provide an index. Each section seems to have been prepared independent of other chapters. Some outlines have not changed, and others are simply revamped (i.e., “Nonsurgical Peripherally Applied Neuroaugmentative and Counterirritation Techniques” to “Stimulation-Produced Analgesia”). Notably, however, references have been updated. Each topic is outlined but in a varied presentation style ranging from very broad in scope with supporting detail (such as that found in the pain in pregnancy and labor chapter) to brief, condensed bulleted outlines (i.e., chronic urogenital pain). Deserving special mention in this new edition is the new improved pediatric pain chapter which now includes sections on pain in infants, nondrug and drug therapies, children’s pain perception, palliative care, and ethical considerations. The references for palliative pain are also expanded and updated.

Future editions might attempt to standardize the outline format used for each topic presented in “clinical states.” For example, while several chapters (including those on neuropathic pain, musculoskeletal pain, muscle and myofascial pain) approach their topic systematically with sections such as definition, epidemiology, etiology, diagnosis, characteristics, and therapeutic interventions, others seem to fall short in providing this structure and detail. Particularly disappointing was that among the sections with these shortcomings are important topics such as visceral pain, low back and neck pain. Just as each topic is presented in slightly different ways, it is observed that some topics are heavily referenced (muscle and myofascial pain) and others sparsely referenced (headache). Upon closer review, one will find that in the case of headache, the authors heavily relied on three recently revised and leading textbooks in the field of headache, both in the second and third editions. In comparison, the muscle and myofascial pain section cited approximately 112 references, predominantly journal articles and just one textbook. Perhaps future editions could rate references on the basis of evidence such as is done with systematic reviews. The current edition’s inclusion of related topics in selected chapters such as psychological therapies, alternative therapies such as traditional Chinese medi-
cine, and work rehabilitation were redeeming features, however, and should be expanded if possible in future editions.

Future potential enhancements notwithstanding, as a framework for curriculum planning and independent study in *Pain Medicine*, this text is a must-have. Not only does this curriculum offer a strong base of self study for those in training as well as practicing pain clinicians, but this edition continues to provide a clear and concise roadmap for administrators preparing curricula at teaching institutions. There is a clear track record for this resource, now in its third edition, that it will continue to make improvements in subsequent editions and respond to the ongoing evolution of the expanding field of pain medicine. In order to further broaden their reach, the Core Curriculum group plans on having this resource available on the world wide web in hopes of making the most recent updates to the curriculum readily available and to facilitate ongoing revision. Directors of pain management training programs, practicing clinicians, and physicians-in-training alike will find the third edition of *Core Curriculum for Professional Education in Pain* edited by J. Edmond Charlton an important addition to one’s library.

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