

Visceral Pain

Visceral pain is notoriously difficult to manage even in the presence of clear pathology (inflammatory bowel disease, recalcitrant angina, chronic pancreatitis, endometriosis).

If significant psychosocial components co-exist prior to the onset of pain or as a sequelae of living with visceral pain, this perpetuates and drives the chronicity of visceral pain. Opioid analgesics are ineffective, some membrane stabilisers maybe beneficial. Prolonged ineffective opioid use result in addiction and worsening of pain (hyperalgesia). Interventions are limited, including implantable devices.

Pain management focuses on

- psychological and psychiatric input
- education and setting realistic expectation
- [containment](#) approach (avoid over-investigate) and harm minimisation (particularly with opioids).

Information Required

- Diagnosis if possible
- Relevant specialist opinion / Past treatments (surgery, medication)
- Current analgesic medication (avoid opioid)
- Past pain management strategies
- Yellow flags : psychology, psychiatrist
- Expectation of attending pain unit

Investigations Required

- This are often completed (pathology and imaging) or if not, as per clinical assessment

Fax Referrals to

- Repatriation General Hospital Outpatient Clinic Fax: 8277 9476
- Flinders Medical Centre Pain Unit Fax: 8374 1758

Red Flags

Red flags should prompt immediate GP referral to **Emergency Department**

- 🚩 As per specific viscera (heart, kidney, bowel) pain with clinical signs supported by investigations
- 🚩 Opioid is to be avoided without acute life-threatening diagnosis

Suggested GP Management

- Psychology input via MHC Plan
- Psychiatry input
- Regular review and reassurance if no new pathology or if there are no pathology (Containment approach)
- Explanation on realistic expectation from pain unit assessment as detailed above

Clinical Resources

- FMC [Containment Guidelines](#)

General Information to assist with referrals and the and Referral templates for FMC and RGH are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
1.0	November 2014	November 2016	Original