

Pain Co-Morbidities: Understanding and Treating the Complex Patient.

*Editors: Maria Adele Giamberardino and Troels Staehelin Jensen.
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The editors aim was twofold, first to give clinicians a better understanding of the influence of co-morbidities on the experience of chronic pain and secondly how to provide optimal care for these patients. To this end the top researchers and clinicians in the field have all contributed chapters.

The book is divided into three sections - the first dealt with general aspects, epidemiology and models, both human and animal. This was interesting in terms of the development of pain from non-painful co-morbidities and the parallels in pain between animals and humans found in experimental studies. Genetic, hormonal, immunological and psychosocial influences on chronic pain were also discussed.

Section two looked at ten specific conditions and how these conditions affect chronic pain. Some conditions covered were hypertension, diabetes and obesity. This was valuable to the clinician as a reminder to do a thorough assessment of all body systems with each client and then treat appropriately. John D Loeser's comment that "the complaint of pain almost always decreases as the co-morbidities are successfully managed" sums up why we need to broaden our approach to these patients.

The third section looked at treatment methods, such as the MDT team, pharmacological and psychological approaches, and psychiatric attitudes to anti-depressants.

As a physiotherapist working mainly in Pain Management, I found this book very informative in some places and in others it was overly complex and repetitious. Within my own department the chapter on Pain and Hypertension was used to promote discussion at a practice tutorial and subsequently stimulated some clinicians to further their own knowledge in this area.

The strengths of the book are the calibre of the authors, the chapters on the co-morbidities and from a biased point of view the MDT chapter. The excellent list of references and the overview of all chapters presented at the end of the book were all added bonuses. One of the weaknesses was how much information overlapped between authors as this caused a high amount of repetition and affected the overall quality of the book. I think it is a useful reference book and a valuable resource to ascertain how certain conditions would affect a client's pain.

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