

Pain Management Center at Stanford University

The Pain Management Center at Stanford University Medical Center offers a comprehensive range of services for patients with acute or chronic pain. Through the combined expertise of a multidisciplinary team of pain specialists, Stanford offers the most advanced treatment options currently available, in a supportive, compassionate environment.

Comprehensive Evaluation & Individualized Treatment Plans

Patients may be referred to the Pain Management Center to undergo specific procedures, or for a multidisciplinary medical, psychological, and functional evaluation of their condition. The treatment plans developed by the Pain Management team are specially tailored to the patient's condition and degree of pain, needs, and personal objectives. Plans are developed and monitored in consultation with the referring physician and other providers, using validated outcome measures to assess efficacy of treatment. The Pain Center welcomes challenging cases: our specialists can almost always offer meaningful symptomatic relief, and can often provide substantial restoration of function, even in cases of complex occupational injuries.

Multidisciplinary Approach

The Pain Management team includes highly experienced physicians (anesthesiologists specializing in pain management and other physician specialists), nurses, psychologists, rehabilitation specialists and social workers. Treatment plans may encompass medication; procedural therapy; psychological, rehabilitative and occupational therapy; and alternatives such as physician-administered acupuncture and transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS).

Innovative Procedures

The Stanford Pain Management team includes anesthesiologists who are experts in diagnostic and therapeutic blocks as well as more advanced therapies, including intrathecal drug delivery systems (spinal pumps) and spinal cord stimulation.

Diagnostic blocks selectively anesthetize key areas in the spine or periphery. These short-term blocks provide valuable information to augment the clinician's exam findings and data from MRI and CT scans. Therapeutic blocks place anti-inflammatory agents in the site of mechanical or chemical irritation: they can provide prolonged pain relief lasting weeks to months. Epidural steroid injections, facet injections, selective nerve root blocks, sympathetic blocks, radiofrequency ablation, and even epiduroscopy are all offered. Therapeutic blocks are combined with a rehabilitative program to improve the patient's function and quality of life.

Spinal cord stimulation involves implanting an electrode in the epidural space that emits signals controlled by the patient via a small pacemaker-like device. These electrical signals produce a tingling sensation in the affected area, blocking the perception of pain. Patients who are good candidates for spinal cord stimulation include those with chronic nerve pain in their arms or legs, those with back pain who have failed conservative treatments, and those who have pain in their limbs from ischemic pain, ulcers or vascular insufficiency.

Intraspinal therapies may be offered to patients who have completed conservative treatments. Morphine and other agents are infused near the spinal cord to provide profound analgesia and reduced side effects. The pain service has also performed trials of novel analgesics, such as Ziconotide, unavailable to community physicians.

Advanced Technology

The Stanford Pain Management anesthesiologists have invested in state of the art fluoroscopic and interventional MRI equipment and perfected techniques to ensure that technically challenging procedures are performed in the safest and most effective way possible.

Clinical Trials

The Stanford Pain Management Center conducts research in the areas of new medications, advanced imaging techniques, and pain management outcomes. Participation in ongoing studies offers patients access to new medications and procedures that are not generally available in the medical community.

Faculty

Director: Raymond Gaeta, M.D.

Pain Management Faculty:

Michael Leong, M.D.

Sean Mackey, M.D., Ph.D.

Dr. Joshua L. Kirz, PhD

Referrals & Program Information:

If you have any questions about the Stanford Pain Management Center, please call (650) 723-6238. All services require physician referrals. Referral forms may be downloaded from our website or mailed to you at your convenience.

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