Pain Terms and Taxonomies

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1 Common Pain Definitions

Thus, we have two primary goals in this chapter: (1) to provide definitions for many commonly used terms in the pain literature, in an effort to bring about consistency and thereby improve communication, and

1.1 Pain

An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage (emphasis added)[1].

It should be noted that some have argued that inclusion of the phrase "described in terms of such damage" is problematic because it assumes an ability to verbally communicate that may not be present in very young children and individuals with limitations in their verbal abilities[1].

They also suggest that the use of the term unpleasant may trivialize the experience which may greatly exceed the unpleasant nature of the experience[1]. Moreover, the original IASP definition fails to incorporate advanced knowledge as to the important role of cognitive, social, and contextual factors. Williams and Craig5 suggest a revised definition, "Pain is a distressing experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage with sensory, emotional, cognitive, and social components," to take these factors into consideration[1].

2 Classification systems and Taxonomies of Pain

(2) to describe and discuss different classification systems or taxonomies that have been used or proposed, in an attempt to improve communication and bring consistency to research and treatment of patients reporting pain

1.   Ballantyne J, Fishman S, Rathmell JP, eds. *Bonica's Management of Pain.* 5th ed. Wolters Kluwer; 2019.