



Pain and spirituality: Where do they intersect?

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HammondCare

An independent Christian charity

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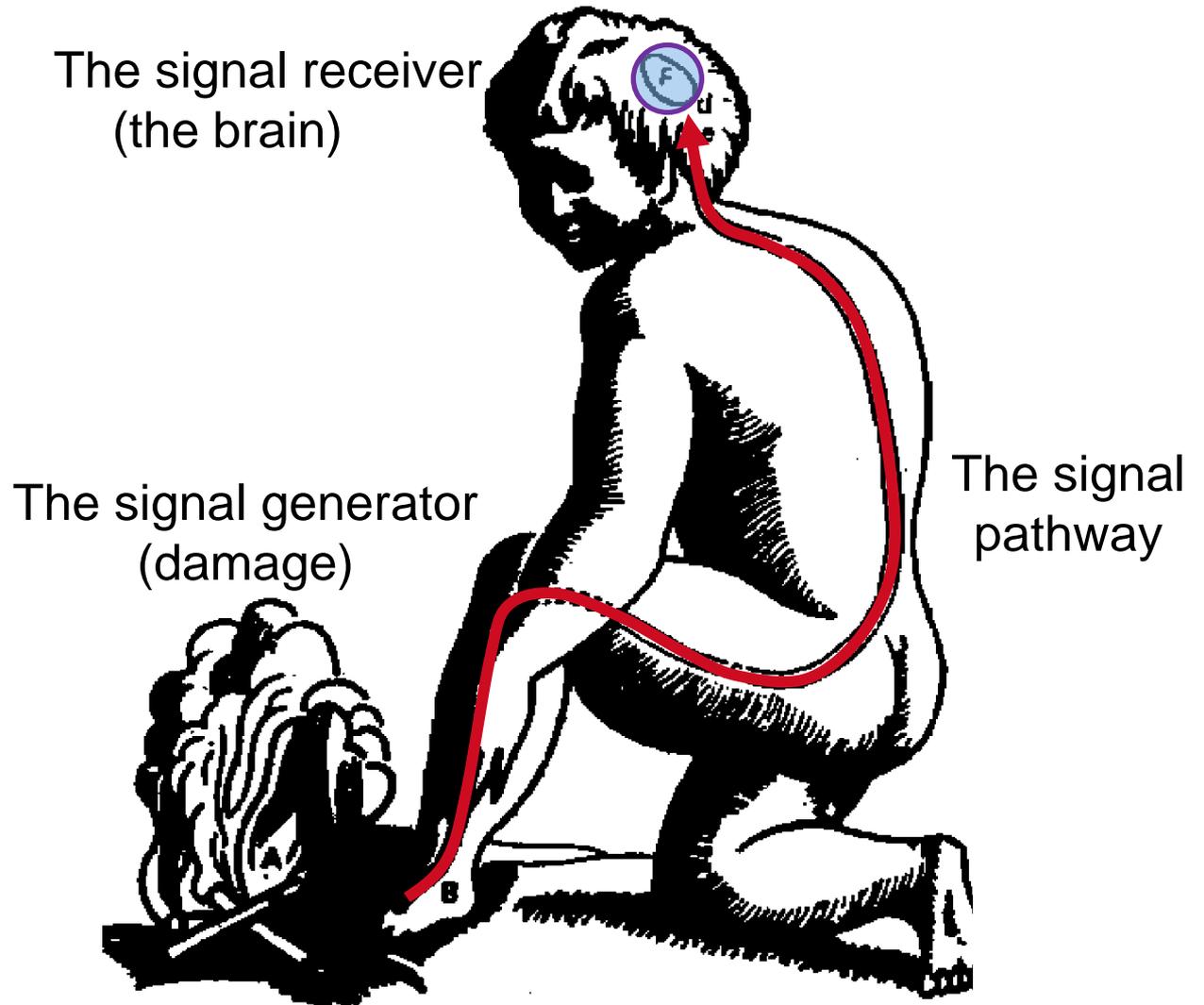
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Pain as a biological experience



Rene Descartes
1640

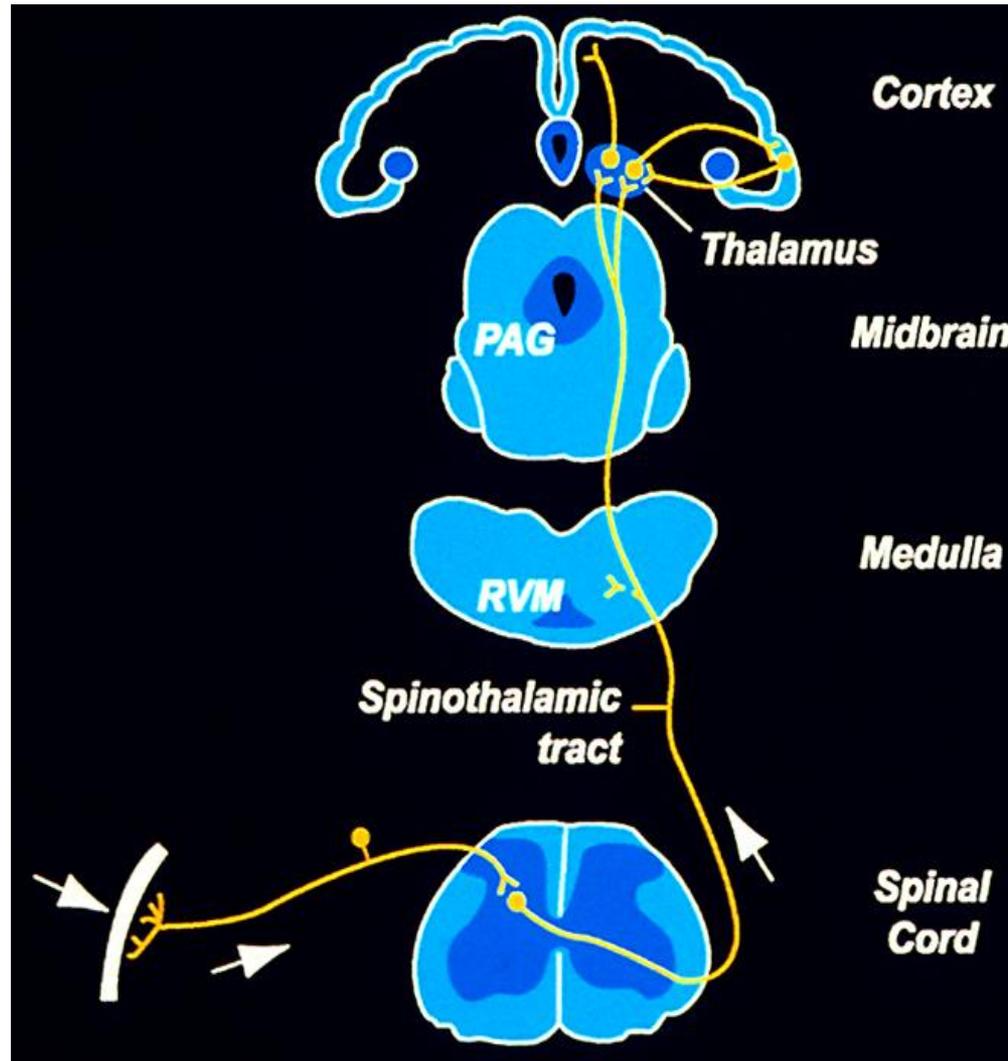


The signal receiver
(the brain)

The signal generator
(damage)

The signal
pathway

Pain as a biological experience



from Fields HL, Price DD. In: Harrington A, ed. *The Placebo Effect. An Interdisciplinary Exploration*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press; 1997:106.

Pain as a signal of biological damage







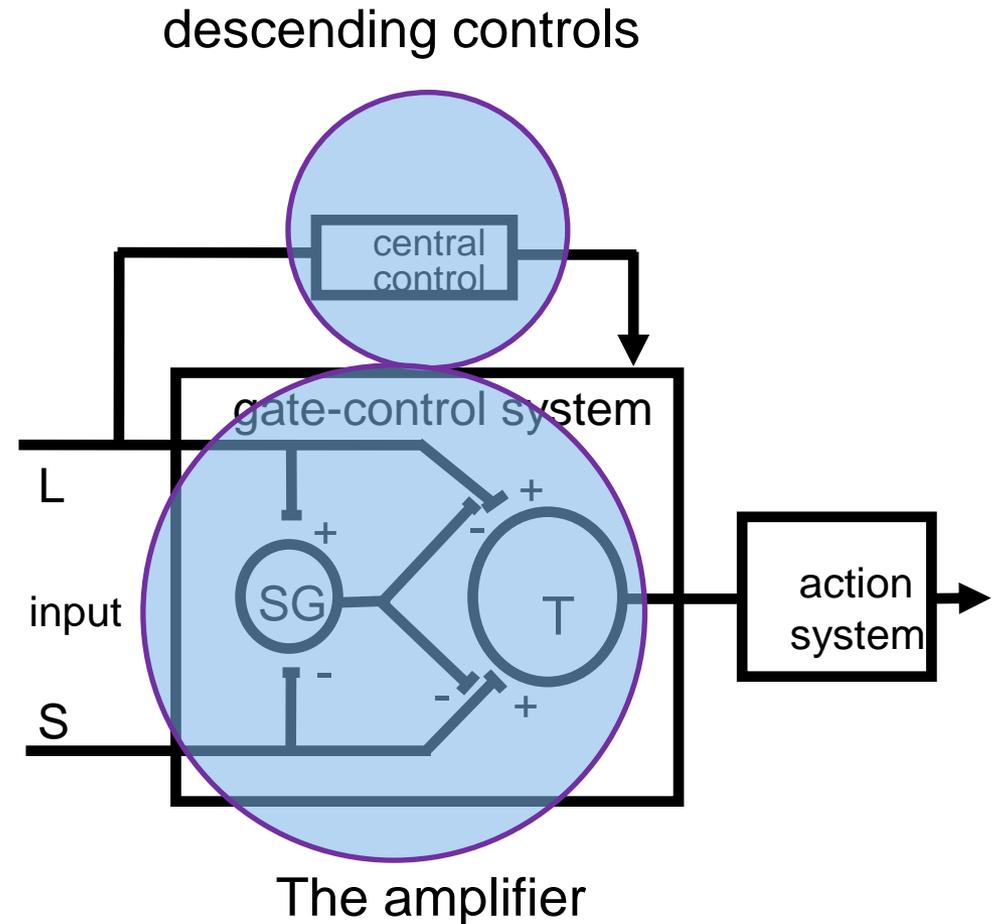
The Gate Theory

Melzack R, Wall PD. Pain mechanisms: a new theory. Science. 1965;150:971-9.

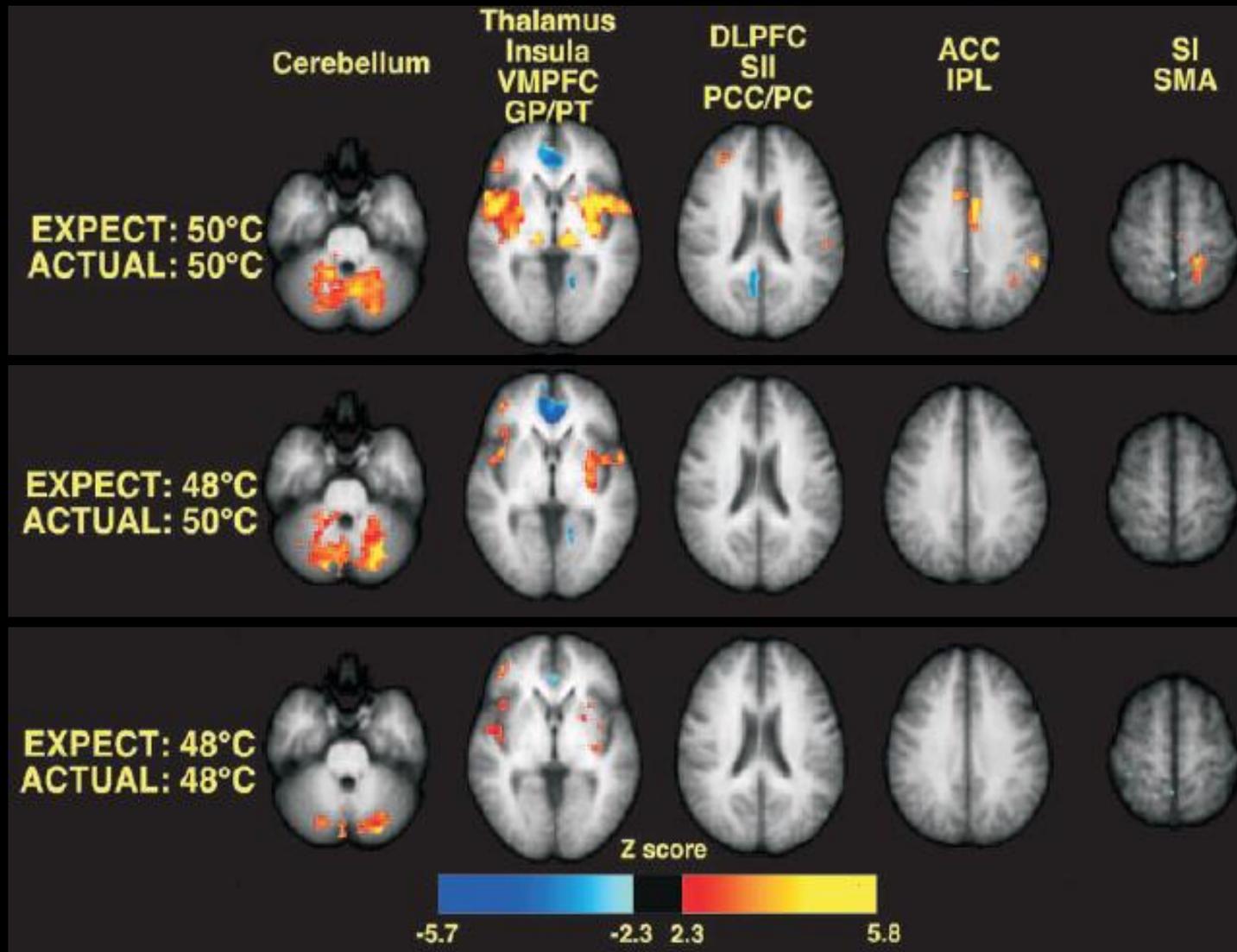


Melzack & Wall
1965

The signal generator



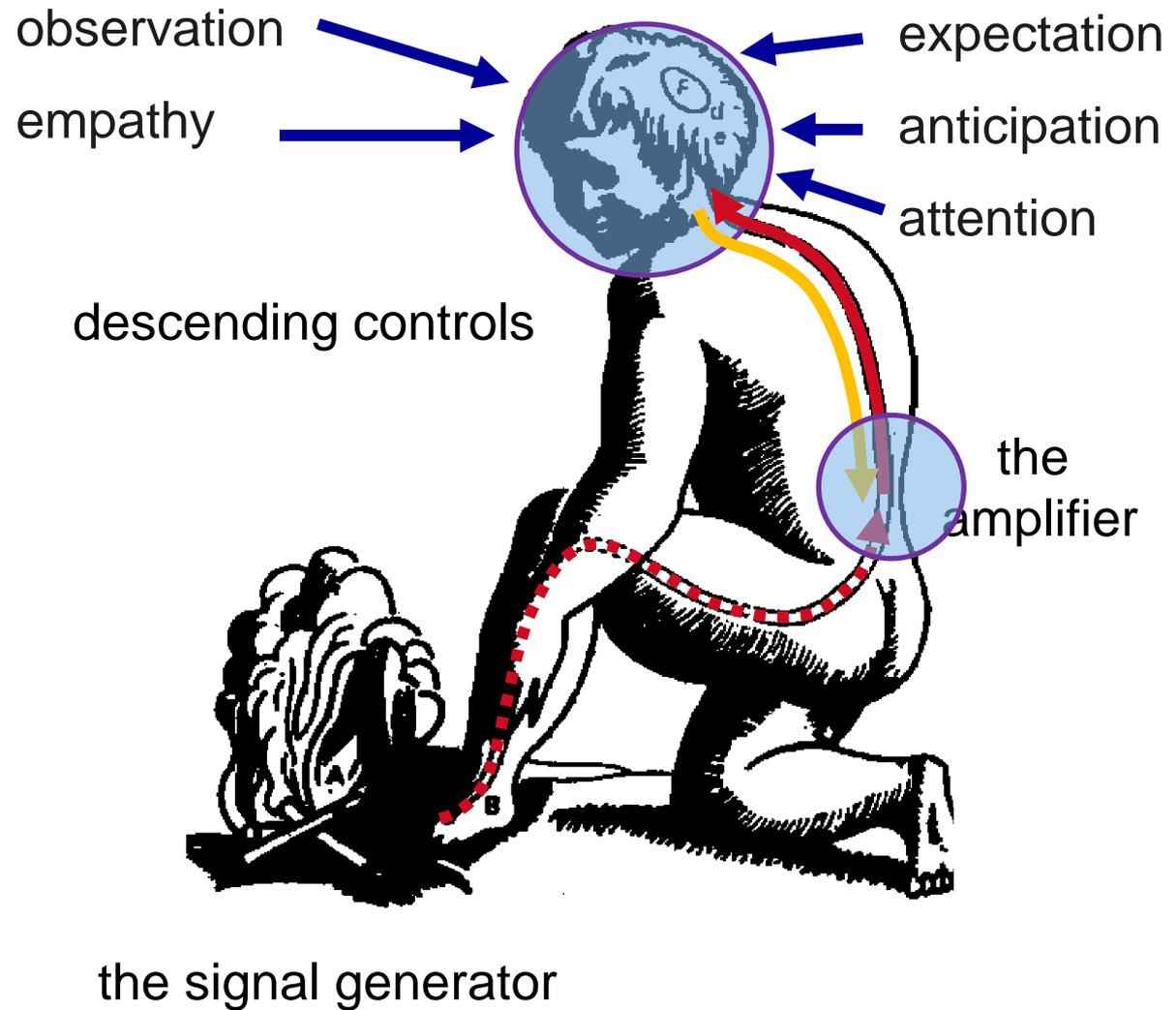
Expectation affects brain responses





Peper E, Wilson VE, Gunkelman J, et al. Tongue Piercing by a Yogi: QEEG Observations. *Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback*. 2006;31:331-338.

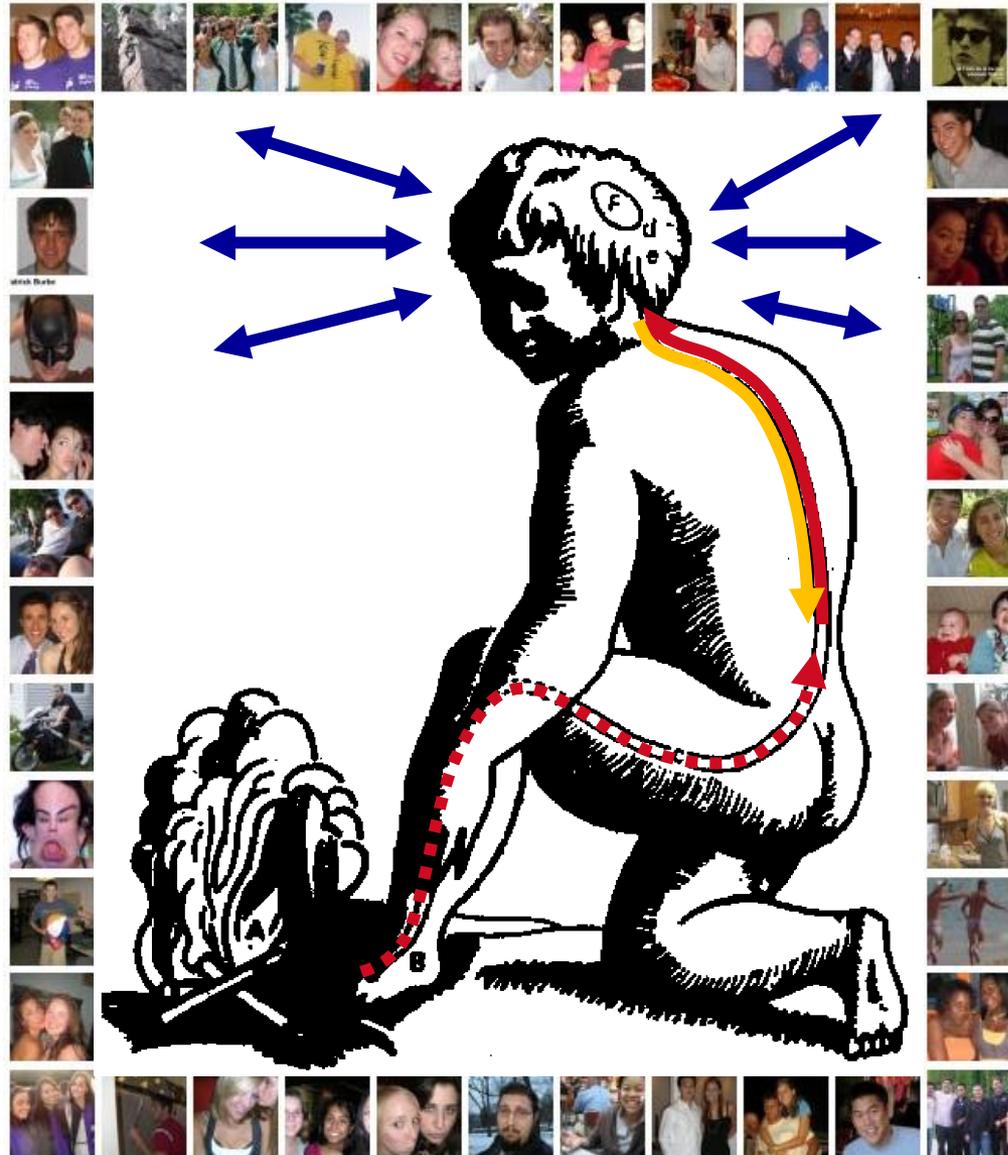
Pain as a biopsychological experience



Pain as a biopsychosocial experience



George Engel
1977



Pain as a biopsychosocial experience



Pain is all about context

Pain as a biopsychosocialspiritual experience

PHYSICAL

Other symptoms
S/Es of treatment
Insomnia/ fatigue

SOCIAL

Worry about family/
finances
Loss – job/ role in
family/ social position
Isolation

Total pain

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Anger towards illness/
professional
Disfigurement
Fear of pain/ death
Helplessness/ loss of
control

SPIRITUAL

Why me?
What's the point?
Purpose/ meaning of life/
God



Spirituality - definitions

- “A personal search for meaning and purpose in life which may or may not be related to religion.”

Tanyi 2002

- “Spirituality relates to awareness of [the] ultimate meaning and purpose of life. It may or may not be associated with religion, which is an expression of spiritual belief through an organised system of rituals and practices”.

Calman 2008

* Calman K. Spirituality and medical education. Medical Education 2008; 42: 123–124

The spiritual context

What does this pain mean?

For my relationships with my friends and family

- How long will I be with them?
- Do they see me as a failure?

For my relationship with God, higher power

- Does God care? Is God there?
- Is this is a trial? Am I being punished?

For my identity

- My role in the family
- My role as a productive member of society

For the future

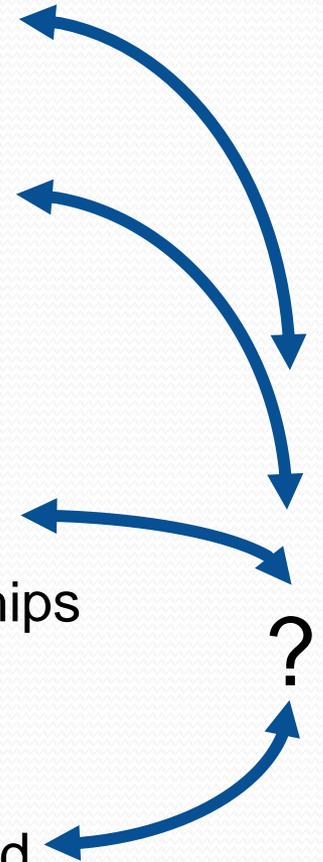
- Loss of hope



The biopsychospiritual approach



- The biological
 - physical pain
 - physical limitations
- The psychological
 - depression
 - anxiety
 - anger
- The social
 - impact on relationships
- The spiritual
 - meaning, purpose
 - relationship with God
 - identity
 - hope



Pain and spirituality

1. How does pain impact spiritual wellbeing?
2. How does spiritual wellbeing impact pain?

Pain and spirituality

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Measure of spiritual wellbeing: FACIT-Sp

5 point scale

- › 1 I feel peaceful
- › 2 I have a reason for living
- › 3 My life has been productive
- › 4 I have trouble feeling peace of mind
- › 5 I feel a sense of purpose in my life
- › 6 I am able to reach down deep into myself for comfort
- › 7 I feel a sense of harmony within myself
- › 8 My life lacks meaning and purpose
- › 9 I find comfort in my faith or spiritual beliefs
- › 10 I find strength in my faith or spiritual beliefs
- › 11 My illness has strengthened my faith or spiritual beliefs
- › 12 I know that whatever happens with my illness, things will be okay

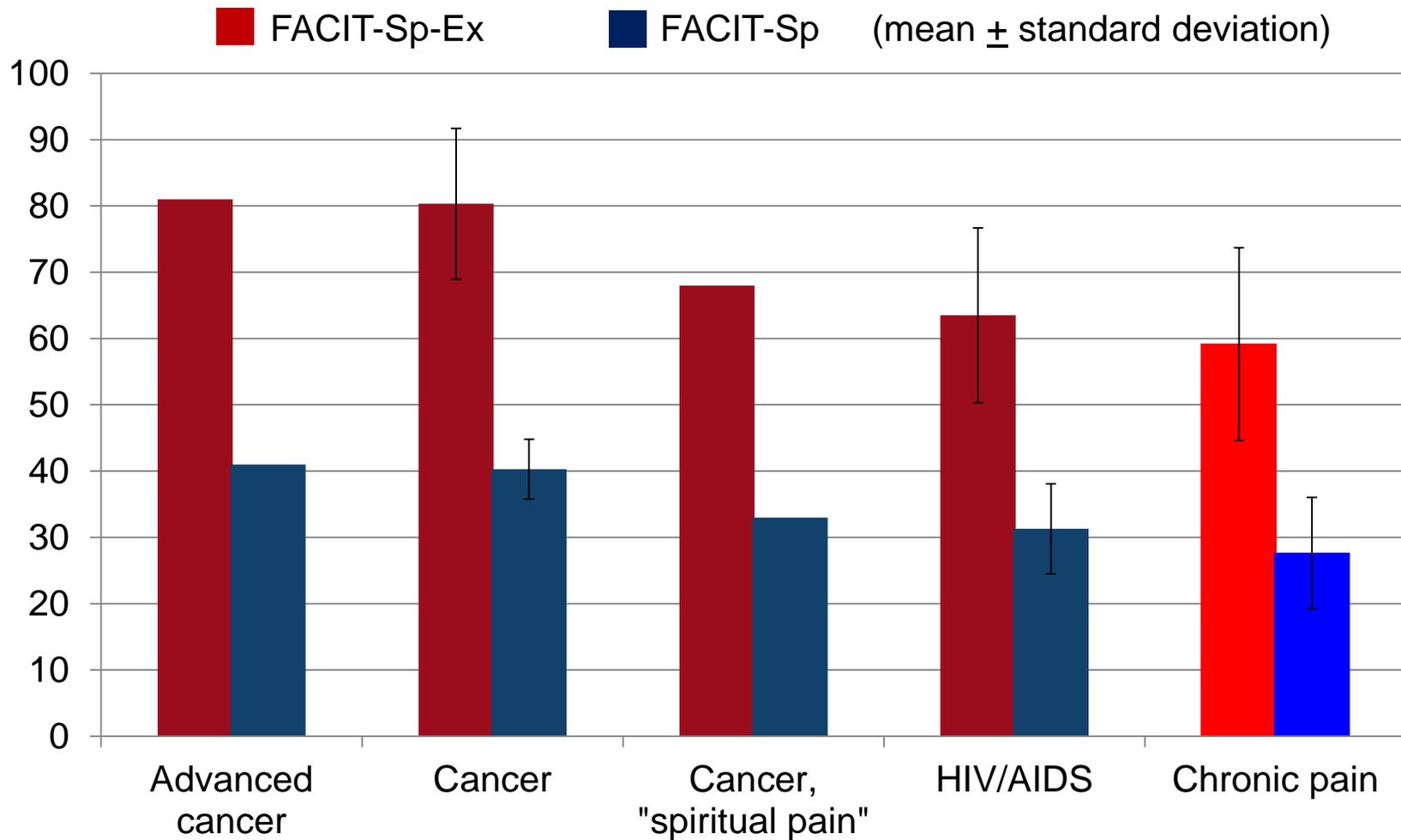


FACIT-Sp-Extended

- › 13 I feel connected to a higher power (or God)
- › 14 I feel connected to other people
- › 15 I feel loved
- › 16 I feel love for others
- › 17 I am able to forgive others for any harm they have ever caused me
- › 18 I feel forgiven for any harm I may have ever caused
- › 19 Throughout the course of my day, I feel a sense of thankfulness for my life
- › 20 Throughout the course of my day, I feel a sense of thankfulness for what others bring to my life
- › 21 I feel hopeful
- › 22 I feel a sense of appreciation for the beauty of nature
- › 23 I feel compassion for others in the difficulties they are facing



The impact of pain on spiritual wellbeing



Pain and spirituality

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The influence of spirituality on pain

- People who are more religious (in terms of importance to life rather than practice) have lower levels of pain, better mood and better quality of life (Luchettit et al 2011)
- The centrality of someone's belief is a significant factor in maintaining a high level of life satisfaction in the presence of pain (Dezutter et al 2010)
- The type of experience rather than the experience itself eg punishing God is associated with worse pain experience (Rippentrop et al 2005, Bush et al 1999, Dezutter et al 2010)

Addressing spiritual issues

- Meaning centred – therapist
- Stress reduction – yoga, mindfulness
- Meditation techniques
- Narrative, life review

Attentive listening, kindness, compassion, gentleness, empathy, trusting relationships with health care givers (Edwards 2013)

The influence of spirituality on pain

- Using spiritual resources results in higher pain tolerance rather than reduced pain intensity (Wachholtz & Pearce 2009)
- Increased tolerance of pain with meditation (Wachholtz & Pargament 2005)
- Reduced frequency of migraines and pain tolerance with spiritual vs secular meditation (Wachholtz & Pargament 2008)

Group Pain Program

› Structure

- › Run primarily by physiotherapist and clinical psychologist
- › 3 hour weekly sessions (9.30 to 12.30) X 6

› Content

- › Pain education
- › Relaxation (deep breathing, muscle)
- › Exercise (stretching, graded activity, pacing, “chunking”)
- › Meditation (acceptance, gratitude, courage)
- › Life reflection, regaining meaning and purpose



Pain program outcomes (baseline to 6 weeks)

	Change %	Effect size	P value
Pain intensity	-34.1	1.33	<0.000001
Perceived disability	-32.0	0.83	<0.00001
Stair climb	48.7	-0.88	0.00006
Depression	-35.5	0.44	0.006
Anxiety	-33.1	0.34	0.04
Pain self efficacy	28.4	-0.62	0.0001
Catastrophising	-38.1	0.44	0.002
FACIT-sp	20.9	-0.52	0.003



29 The impact of spiritual wellbeing on treating pain

Relationship between pain reduction during the program and *baseline* variables, ie predictors of pain relief

<i>Variable</i>	<i>r value</i>	<i>sig</i>
Spiritual wellbeing (FACIT-Sp)	-0.38	0.006
Satisfaction with life	-0.36	0.006
Catastrophising (PCS)	0.20	NS
Pain self efficacy (PSEQ)	-0.18	NS
Depression (DASS 21)	0.11	NS
Anxiety (DASS 21)	0.20	NS
Disability (R&M)	0.04	NS
Stair climb	0.02	NS



A tale of two spiritualities

Bruce

- 63 year old retired army officer
- 20 year history of pain in neck and low back
- multiple falls and incidents
- high levels of pain (8/10)
- Panadeine Forte 4/day, Celebrex 1/day
- likes to ride motor bike and walk and work on house but limited by pain
- depression, anxiety, anger, irritability, PTSD symptoms
- married, pain affecting his relationship with his wife
- does not regard himself as a spiritual person, losing hope, loss of “manhood”
- widespread degenerative changes on spine imaging including encroachment on nerve roots

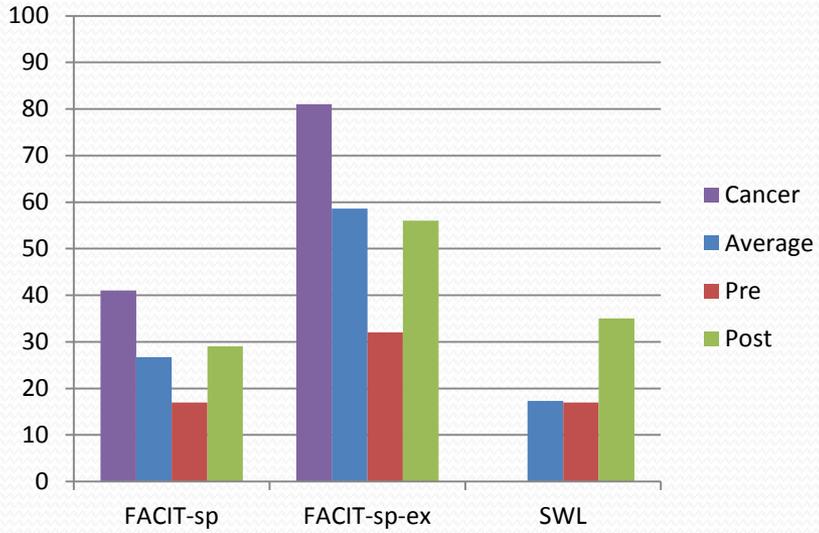


A tale of two spiritualities

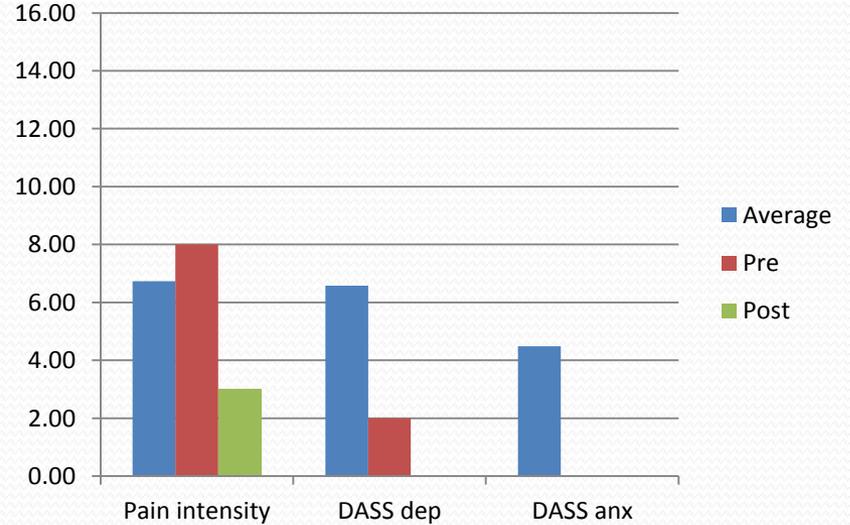
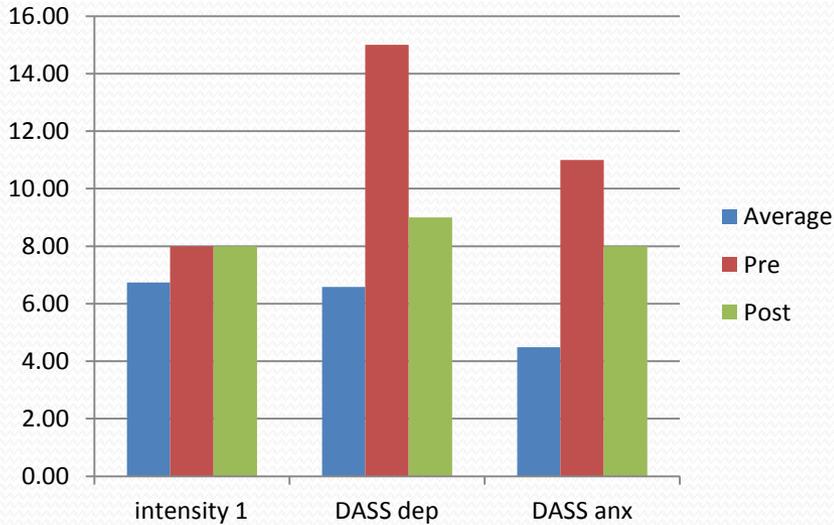
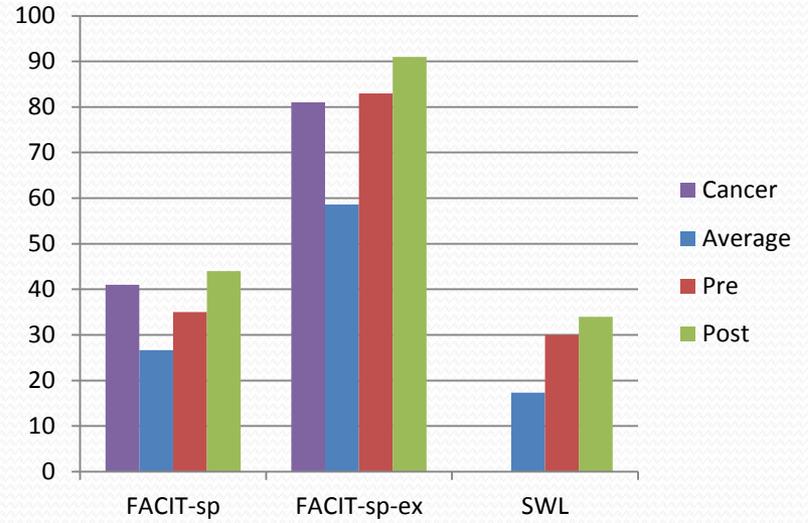
Mary

- 61 year old woman
- 4 year history of pain in low back and both legs
- no clear incident or trauma
- high levels of pain (8/10)
- nortriptyline 50mg nocte, meloxicam 7.5 mg/day, glucosamine
- little impact on physical activities, continues to swim, walk
- no impact on mood, not depressed or anxious
- belongs to a religious order, regards herself as a spiritual person, attended numerous retreats, meditates
- mild scoliosis and mild degenerative changes in spine

Bruce



Mary



A tale of two spiritualities

Bruce

high pain

low spiritual wellbeing

low self efficacy

high catastrophising, depression,
anxiety

PAIN PROGRAM

no change in pain

improved catastrophising, self
efficacy

improved depression, anxiety

improved function

increased satisfaction with life

Mary

high pain

high spiritual wellbeing

high self efficacy

low catastrophising, depression,
anxiety

PAIN PROGRAM

large reduction in pain

some improvement in
catastrophising, self efficacy

minimal depression, anxiety

improved function

high satisfaction with life

Summary

- Spiritual distress is a major contributor to suffering
- Pain has a major impact on spiritual wellbeing
- There is a poor relationship between spiritual wellbeing and pain intensity
- Spiritual wellbeing increases satisfaction with life despite the presence of pain (resilience)



Taking a Spiritual History Allows Clinicians to Understand Patients More Fully

CHRISTINA PUCHALSKI, M.D.¹ and ANNA L. ROMER, Ed.D²

How do spirituality and healthcare intersect?

Finishing thoughts

- Spirituality is about meaning, purpose, identity, hope
- Loss of meaning, purpose, hope are significant contributors to pain and suffering
- How do we bring hope to people who face:
 - the end of their life?
 - a life that will always include pain?
- Spirituality can bring an added dimension to life for the health professional



