

2 February 2004



MEDIA RELEASE: GENERAL

New guidelines aim to improve treatment of musculoskeletal pain

Doctors and patients now have the best available information to treat acute musculoskeletal pain.

The new guidelines provide clear, evidence-based information on how to manage pain in the low back, neck, upper back, knee and shoulder. Special information sheets for consumers have also been developed to help with this process.

According to Project Leader Professor Peter Brooks, The University of Queensland's Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences and coordinator of the National Action Network of the Bone and Joint Decade, the need for clinicians and patients to work together to formulate a plan to relieve acute musculoskeletal pain was the key message contained in the guidelines.

"The goal of the project is to produce a resource that would inform practice in this area for the range of clinicians working with acute musculoskeletal pain, as well as offering a separate consumer information document to promote partnership in decision-making," Professor Brooks said.

This new resource, "Evidence-Based Management of Acute Musculoskeletal Pain" and the consumer information sheets are available online at www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications

"Evidence-Based Management of Acute Musculoskeletal Pain", which has been approved by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC), is the result of a research project that involved a multidisciplinary review of the scientific literature by the Australian Acute Musculoskeletal Pain Guidelines Group. Clinicians from a range of disciplines were involved in the evidence review, including general practitioners, consultant physicians and surgeons, chiropractors, physiotherapists, osteopaths and epidemiologists. The project was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

The Chair of the NH&MRC's Health Advisory Committee, Professor Adele Green, said the NH&MRC was pleased to approve the guidelines, as they were a timely evidence-based resource for health workers and consumers who were faced with managing any of these common and debilitating conditions.

"The guidelines will give patients new insight into their condition, and give them confidence that the treatment options presented to them are based on the best available scientific evidence," Professor Green said.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT FACULTY COMMUNICATIONS
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