

Pain Science Education for Workplace Health and Wellbeing

Keynote Sessions

Faculty:

Cormac Ryan

Persistent pain (also known as chronic pain) is pain that lasts 12 weeks or more. It affects 1 in 4 people and is a leading cause of years lived with disability globally. Persistent pain is also a leading cause of work-related disability and work loss. The human, societal, and economic costs of persistent pain are considerable. Public understanding of persistent pain is limited. Most people hold misconceptions about pain rooted in the outdated structural pathology understanding of persistent pain. These misconceptions act as barriers to good management. Thus, global calls have been made for public health initiatives to address misconceptions. Pain Science Education seeks to facilitate an individual's reconceptualisation of pain from the outdated structural pathology model towards a more biopsychosocial model, in keeping with contemporary scientific understanding. Pain Science Education has been shown to improve the understanding of pain in patients and health professionals. Public health initiatives rooted in Pain Science Education have recently emerged, such as The Pain Revolution in Australia (www.painrevolution.org/ and Flippin' Pain™ in the UK (www.flippinpain.co.uk). These interventions show early promise as approaches to change beliefs on a public health level. As such, there may be considerable value in extending similar initiatives into the workplace to address work-related misconceptions about persistent pain and reframing work not as a threat or risk to health but as a potential force for good health and wellbeing. Such a shift in beliefs may alter expectations and, in turn, positively influence how individuals experience pain and respond to it. Such a movement will require a systems-level approach with support from all stakeholders within the macro (e.g., societal, medico-legal, insurance, policy), meso (organisational) and micro (individual worker) levels.

About Our Speaker:

Cormac Ryan

Cormac Ryan is a Professor of Clinical Rehabilitation at Teesside University, UK. He has a BSc in Sports and Exercise Science, an MSc in Physiotherapy, and a PhD in pain management. He is co-lead of PETAL (Pain Education Team Aspiring Better Learning), an international collaboration aiming to facilitate better public understanding of current thought on 'how pain works' (www.petalcollaboration.org). Cormac has contributed to guidelines/standards for organisations, including the British Pain Society and the Faculty of Pain Medicine. He is the Community Pain Champion for Flippin' Pain™, a UK-wide public health campaign to improve public understanding of pain (www.flippinpain.co.uk).

