

Multidisciplinary approaches to chronic pelvic pain in women and men.

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Pelvic Pain is a common complaint. Most of these patients are referred initially to primary care, urology, gynaecology and gastroenterology. Often the cause of the pain can be found and treated. However, there are a proportion of patients in whom these investigations do not reveal the cause of their pain and fruitless operations and treatments are undertaken without resolution of their symptoms.

Advances in the understanding of the complexity of the nervous system and the awareness of the importance of the biopsychosocial model of pain has assisted in improving the management of these patients.

The question of how this should be implemented in clinical practice remains. A multidisciplinary approach is obviously not needed nor possible for all patients. Education of the general practitioner, the urologist, the gynaecologist and the gastroenterologist is essential to improve the initial consultation. The patient's own ideas and expectations should be explored at the onset of their presentation. Consultations styles have been shown to alter outcome. Patients should be encouraged to understand the multidimensional nature of chronic pain and the limitations of investigations and specific treatments at the outset. This will hopefully lead to an easier acceptance of a multidisciplinary approach to their pain problems.

Results of the multidisciplinary pelvic pain clinic in Leicester are presented and the lessons that have been so far learned are reported.