Executive Summary

- Globally, pain (of all types) is often an unrecognized and inadequately treated problem.
- Fortunately, many effective pain management strategies are “low tech” and cheap and can offer significant improvements to an individual’s quality of life.
- The Essential Pain Management (EPM) workshop has been developed:
  - To improve knowledge about pain.
  - To provide a simple framework for treating pain.
  - To address pain management barriers.
- We ran three EPM 1-day Workshops and one Instructor Workshop, at Northern State Medical University, Arkhangelsk, Russia, from 31st March – 2nd April 2014. We successfully trained a total of 114 health workers.
- Recommendations:
  - Continue with future EPM workshops in Russian.
  - Improve the availability of oral liquid morphine in Russia.
  - Improve pain assessment and ward protocols.

Background

Arkhangelsk has a population of 380,000. The city’s main hospital (City hospital #1) has 1000 beds.

Course participants identified a number of common pain problems, e.g. cancer pain due to advanced breast cancer, postoperative pain and chronic low back pain. If inadequately treated, these pain problems can cause considerable distress for individual patients as well as many negative effects for their family and community.

The EPM Workshop was developed in 2010 to improve pain management worldwide. The workshop uses a management framework called RAT, standing for Recognize, Assess and Treat. This has been used very successfully to discuss common and also difficult pain management scenarios.

Course Dates

We ran three EPM 1-day Workshops and one Instructor Workshop, over three days from 31st March to 2nd April 2014. A 1-day Workshop was held on day 1, at the
School of Pain, followed by a half day Instructor Workshop on day 2. On the third day, the newly trained instructors ran two 1-day Workshops with a new set of participants at the City Hospital #1. This was the first set of EPM workshops to be run both in Russia, and in Europe.

**Course Instructors**

Dr Wayne Morriss, New Zealand  
Consultant Anaesthetist,  
email: w.morriss@me.com

Dr Clare Roques, UK  
Consultant Anaesthetist,  
email: clareroques@hotmail.co.uk

Dr. Michael O’Connor, UK  
Consultant in Pain Management  
email: mike.oconnor@btinternet.com

Dr. Miodrag Milenovic, Serbia  
Consultant Anaesthetist,  
email: milenx@eunet.rs

**Course Participants**

Day 1: 1-day Workshop: 34 participants (all doctors)

Day 2: Instructor Workshop: 25 participants (all doctors)

Day 3: 2, parallel 1-day Workshops: 80 participants in total (doctors, residents, medical students)

The participants were from different regions of Russia (appr. 30% from Arkhangelsk region), Estonia, Belarus and Pakistan.

**Venue and Catering**

The workshops, coordinated by Dr Mikhail Kirov, were held in the School of Pain and at the City hospital #1 of Arkhangelsk. Coffee-breaks and lunches were provided on both days, and overall, the courses were very well organised with prompt timings. The venues were generally very suitable and well equipped, although it may have been helpful to have more, small rooms to work in during the group discussions.

**Teaching Materials**

The standard EPM 1-day Workshop slides were used on days 1 and 2, with written materials translated into Russian, provided for participants. Serial translation of the oral presentations of the English speaking instructors was used as needed. On day 3, the workshops were delivered in Russian. 114 manuals for participants and 34 manuals for instructors were printed by the organizers.
Test Results

Course participants completed a 25-question test at the beginning and end of the workshop to assess learning during the day. On day 1, there was an improvement in mean test scores from 20.2 to 22.2, and on day 3, the mean score improved from 19.0 to 21.3.

Feedback

Participants completed a feedback form at the end of each course. Overall, feedback was very positive with notable comments about the interactive nature of the workshop. “RAT” was popular and the vast majority of participants stated that EPM would change the way they assess and treat pain. A number of participants commented that more workshops in Russian should be conducted.

Examples of participant feedback:

- “We learned simple and efficient classification how to manage pain”
- “Systematic approach to treat pain.”
- “Course needs to be more interactive.”
- “Need more such courses.”
- “EPM course will change my work.”

Publicity / Other Activities

A reporter from the City hospital #1 attended the workshops on day 3 and wrote a short article which appeared on the websites of the City hospital #1, the Northern State Medical University, the Ministry of Health Protection and the national society of anaesthesiologists - FAR. The EPM course was followed by a CEEA course on the neural system and a conference on pain management with 200 participants. The workshops on day three were opened by the Director of City hospital #1, Sergey Krasilnikov, and by the Chief Anesthesiologist of the region, Prof. Eduard Nedashkovsky.

Success and Relevance of Workshops

The workshops were very successful. We ran four EPM workshops and trained over 110 people. The participants for the workshop on day one were generally experienced pain clinicians, so the workshop functioned mostly to demonstrate the format and principles of EPM, rather than to improve their basic knowledge within the field of pain management. However, the considerable experience of these participants, trained as instructors on day 2, led to very efficient workshops on day 3, with limited input required from the overseas faculty.

The RAT approach to managing pain provided a simple framework for managing a variety of pain problems. A number of participants commented on the appropriateness of the teaching. Course participants contributed enthusiastically to discussions and came up with a number of ways of reducing pain management barriers.
The course is cheap to run and emphasises efficient management strategies – quality of life can often be markedly improved by very simple treatments.

Recommendations

1. Continue with EPM Workshops in Russian

There is a need to run more workshops. The number of participants was limited by preliminary registration.

We suggest running further EPM courses in Russian. Regular courses are also needed to maintain knowledge and instructor skills.

2. Add oral liquid morphine to formulary

The lack of fast-release oral liquid morphine was identified as an important pain management barrier in Russia. This drug is on the WHO Essential Medicines List and is very important for pain control in the following situations:

- Initial control of cancer pain before starting slow-release morphine
- Pain management in paediatrics
- End-stage palliative care where patients are having difficulty swallowing

Fast-release oral morphine is also being used increasingly for post-operative pain relief.

Adding liquid morphine (morphine elixir) to the Russian formulary will be an important step in improving pain management. This will be discussed with the Ministry of Health protection.

3. Improve pain assessment and ward protocols

The groups discussed several ideas for improving pain assessment and introducing ward protocols, e.g. recording pain scores on observation charts, writing brief protocols based on the RAT framework for the main types of pain (e.g. post-operative pain, cancer pain).

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Written by: Dr Mikhail Kirov, with contributions from Dr Clare Roques and Dr Michael O’Connor