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Executive summary
Pain is globally an unrecognised 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.
Two 1-day EPM Workshops were organised in Belgrade, Serbia from 8th to 10th December 2015. A total of 110 health workers attended. An Instructor Workshop was also held in Belgrade on 9th December 2015 which had 25 participants. On the third day, 10th December 2015, 15 participants from the Instructor Workshop took the active role as instructors.

Recommendations:
- Run regular, locally led EPM Workshops
- To measure the level of knowledge improvement of local health care workers
- In time, setting up acute pain services in the hospitals, as EPM participants initiative.

Background
The Serbia has a population of approximately 7.5 million. Belgrade is the administrative center with a population of approximately 2 million. The organizer and the host of the event was the Clinical Center of Serbia (CCS), the biggest university hospital in the region. The complex has a wide range of services, including neonatal care, maternity care, internal medicine, general surgery and cardiovascular surgery, organized in 41 organizational units.

As a referent institution for undergraduate and postgraduate academic medical education, CCS is medical research center and affiliated to the University of Belgrade, School of Medicine. CCS devotes special attention to the academic education of the employees. With more than seven thousand employees, CCS is the largest provider of health services in Serbia and one of the largest in the region, with of more than one million patients annually. In its premises CCS treated more than 90 000 hospitalized patients, performed over 50 000 operations and more than 7 000 births. Day case treatments are offered to 25 000 patients and performed over 5 000 operations.

Participants identified a number of common pain problems, e.g. acute postoperative pain, cancer pain due to advanced breast cancer 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 (Recognize, Assess and Treat). This has been well accepted by the participants and used to discuss common and also difficult pain management scenarios.
Course Participants
Day 1: 1-Day Workshop 8th December, 35 participants.
Day 2: Instructor Workshop 9th December, 25 participants.
Day 3: 1-Day Workshop 10th December, 75 participants.

Course Participants came from all Serbian regions, including Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and of Kosovo and Metohija, doctors and nurses from government hospital, private sector hospitals as well as some non government organizations (eg. Doctors without border). Although, majority of workshop participants came from Serbia, several participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia gave to EPM workshop regional recognition. Participants of different medical specialty took part in a workshop: medical doctors, specialists and trainees in anaesthesiology, surgery, physiatry and rehabilitation, rheumatology, neurology, general practitioners, clinical pharmacology; medical students; and anaesthesia, surgery and palliative care nurses.
Programme opening
The workshop was opened on 8th December, by Dr Miodrag Milenovic, EPM Serbia project Director, Prof. Dr Nevena Kalezic, Head of Anaesthesiology and Resuscitation Department, Clinical Center of Serbia, Assoc. Prof. Nebojsa Ladjevic, Vice-President of Serbian Association of Anaesthesiologists and Intensivists (SAAI) and Dr Wayne Morriss, WFSA Education Committee member and one of the authors of the EPM Workshops.

Venue and Catering
All workshops were held in the Company Hemofarm A.D. business center, which was a very good venue, with plenty of space for the lectures to break out into smaller discussion groups. The venue was close to city center and hotel where international instructors were accommodated. Very good, high quality catering of food and coffee / tea was provided.

Teaching Material
The standard EPM Workshop slides were used. The manuals and all other paperwork were printed in EPM Serbia, funded by WFSA project grant.

Test Results
Course participants where aloud to stay anonymous during pre and post test. Majority completed pre-test at the beginning and the post-test at the end of the workshop to assess learning during the day. For the workshop on day 1, the mean pre-course test score was 77% and the mean post-course test score was 86%. On day 3 the mean pre-course score was 75% and the mean post-course score was 89%.

Feedback and Evaluation
Participants were enthusiastic during the programme, and were comfortable in small group discussions between themselves. The newly trained, local instructors on Day 3 managed to handle the course materials, and taught with great skill and confidence.

Participants and instructors completed a feedback form at the end of each course. Overall, the feedback was extremely positive for each of the 3 workshops. The RAT approach was popular and the vast majority of participants stated that EPM would change their practice and teaching. Some of the participants’ comments, written on the evaluation forms, or expressed directly to the organizer and to other participants of the course were: "The best way of systematizing and delivering of knowledge", "You made my day", "Never before I participated in such dynamic, simple but brilliant course". It showed that beside considerable elevation of knowledge, participants and instructors enjoyed its active role in delivering and accepting the knowledge.
Other Activities
On Monday, 7th December 2015, Dr Wayne Morriss, Dr Michael O’Connor and Dr Dr Miodrag Milenovic visited Directorial offices of the Clinical Center of Serbia Emergency Hospital and was welcomed by the Hospital Director Assist. Dr Marko Ercegovac, neurology specialist. Current Minister of Health in Serbian Government, Assist. Dr. Zlatibor Loncar, surgery specialist, joined the reception at the Directorial offices, welcomed guests and endorsed EPM Serbia project.

Success and Relevance of Workshops
The EPM workshops were very successful. We ran three EPM Workshops and trained 90 participants and 25 new instructors. 15 of these new instructors took active part and will teach EPM on formal courses, but all will return to their place of work as and will be able to integrate EPM into their daily work and mentor colleagues in its use.

The RAT approach provided a simple and unique framework for managing a variety of pain problems, and overall feedback was very positive. Course participants and new trained instructors contributed enthusiastically to discussions and came up with a number of ways of reducing pain management barriers. These included the introduction of guidelines and protocols, training of health care workers, and initiatives to improve communication with patients.

The voluntary contribution of the course instructors and their good will and commitment to improving global pain relief will be a valuable asset to pain management in Serbia and the region.

We hope that in the future:
- We are going to set up regular EPM workshops in Serbia and the region, to improve pain management, knowledge and awareness amongst local health care workers.
- We are going to measure the level of knowledge improvement of local health care workers.
- EPM participants, in time, will give the initiative for setting up acute pain services in the hospitals.
Acknowledgements
We are grateful to the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists for project funding support that made possible organization of the EPM courses in December 2015, in Serbia. We wish to thank to Serbian Association of Anaesthesiologists and Intensivists for endorsement of this project.
We are thankful to one of the EPM Authors and international EPM Course instructor: Dr Wayne Morriss, Christchurch Hospital, Christchurch, New Zealand; and other international instructors Dr Michael O’Connor, Severn Postgraduate Medical Education, Bristol, UK; Dr Viktor Kubricht, District Hospital Pribram, Czech Republic; Prof. Dr Dusica Simic, MD, PhD, University Children’s Hospital, Belgrade, Serbia; and to Assist. Dr Miodrag Milenovic, MD, PhD, Clinical Center of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia.
We are thankful to Dr Marija Rajkovic, who helped me in workshop manual translation to Serbian language.
We wish to thank to the Serbian Ministry of Health and Minister Assist. Dr. Zlatibor Loncar and to Director of Emergency Hospital of Clinical Center of Serbia, Assist. Dr Marko Ercegovac for endorsement of EPM Serbia project.

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