



# Essential Pain Management

*Improving lives around the world by training health workers to recognize, assess and treat pain.*

EPM Sub-committee

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## Introduction

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Unrelieved pain is a major global healthcare problem and its importance is often unrecognized. Pain has many causes including trauma, childbirth, surgery, arthritis and cancer. Adequate pain management results in fewer medical complications, earlier hospital discharge and improved quality of life.

**Essential Pain Management (EPM)** is a short, easily deliverable and cost-effective training program designed to improve pain management worldwide. EPM provides a systematic approach for managing patients in pain and also a system for teaching others about pain management.

EPM aims to:

- Improve pain knowledge.
- Teach health workers to **Recognize, Assess and Treat** pain (**RAT**).
- Address pain management barriers.
- Train local health workers to teach EPM.

## Why EPM?

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There is a need for EPM because:

- Pain is often unrecognised and poorly treated.
- Improving knowledge and changing attitudes improves pain management.
- Simple and inexpensive treatments can make a big difference.

Good pain management is similar to good trauma management. Both require teamwork and a systematic approach. Health workers are all familiar with the ABC (Airway, Breathing, Circulation) approach in trauma management but, until now, there has been no similar approach in pain management. **RAT (Recognize, Assess, Treat)** offers this systematic approach.

## The EPM program

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EPM is cost-effective, multi-disciplinary and encourages early handover of teaching to local instructors. The program is flexible and has been taught in over 30 countries around the world.

**The Standard EPM program** comprises two parts – the EPM Workshop and the EPM Instructor Workshop.

**The EPM Workshop** is a one-day program of interactive lectures and group discussions. Participants learn the basics of pain management, apply the RAT approach during case discussions, and problem-solve pain management barriers.

**The EPM Instructor Workshop** is a half-day program designed to provide participants with the knowledge and skills to become EPM instructors. Participants learn the basics of adult learning, practise teaching skills and plan their own EPM workshops. The EPM Instructor Workshop is followed by one-day workshops taught by the new instructors.

**EPM Lite** is designed for medical and nursing students and is a modified version of the one-day workshop. The program can be delivered in 4-5 hours and covers the basics of pain management as well as how to use the RAT approach.

## Who can attend?

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The EPM program is designed for any health worker who comes in contact with patients who have pain. The RAT approach can be applied to pain of all types (acute or chronic, cancer or non-cancer) and can be used by all types of health workers, including doctors, nurses, clinic workers and pharmacists.

For some, the information in the EPM Workshop will be new. For others, the course will provide revision of basic principles, a systematic approach for managing patients in pain and a system for teaching others about pain management.

## What is the next step?

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More information is available on the EPM website ([www.essentialpainmanagement.org](http://www.essentialpainmanagement.org)). You are welcome to download the EPM Workshop manual and PowerPoint slides.

We are actively seeking partners to help us deliver the EPM course, if you are interested in running the program at your hospital, clinic or university, please contact us at: [epm@anzca.edu.au](mailto:epm@anzca.edu.au).

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*EPM was developed with the assistance of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and is supported by the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists, the International Association for the Study of Pain, and the Australian Society of Anaesthetists.*