

What Is Interdisciplinary Treatment?

Given the picture painted above, it is understandable that chronic pain represents such a complex pattern of alteration to bodily and psychological function that it seldom has a simple solution. It is unfortunately the case that most therapies offered for the treatment of back and other pain conditions have a poor record of success. Whilst people often cite the extraordinary benefits of hip replacement, which can cure pain in the vast majority of cases, such results are just not obtainable for any known back pain therapy. Thus the success rate for spinal surgery, various injections such as epidurals or facet blocks, alternative therapies or passive physiotherapy do not help in any more than one in five to one in ten people.

Many people with pain recognise that they need something more than just another injection or even an operation. Interdisciplinary treatment aims to address the whole person within a rehabilitation approach. Rehabilitation simply means the focus is directed to getting the person a fit, strong, mobile, and as healthy as possible given that they have a medical condition which is not curable.

A large number of scientific studies have now confirmed that **interdisciplinary rehabilitation treatment** using a **cognitive behavioural approach** (as delivered by the RealHealth Institute) offers a much better chance of making improvements to function, quality of life and overall mood and wellbeing than single modality treatments. In fact, in recent research an intensive functional restoration programme has been shown to be as good as spinal surgery in sufferers for back pain considered for this operation.

Many patients who attend an interdisciplinary rehabilitation program find that they are able to get back to a level of function that they had not dreamed possible prior to the intervention. Essentially the treatment aims to solve the secondary problems and deficits of function that occur as outlined above and enhance the person's ability to understand their pain and cope positively with it. In addition, the focus is directed to helping the individual manage and adapt their activity schedule to enable them to achieve their desired activities.

Such treatments are often called **cognitive behavioural**. This is the term for a psychologically based treatment where the emphasis is on helping an individual to understand what is wrong and make positive changes in a systematic, logical and graded way. Such treatments have been shown to be effective for a number of different conditions, (including pain and depression) but are not in any way a form of psychoanalysis or psychotherapy. Cognitive behavioural therapy works because it is practical, logical and applicable for a huge number of individuals. Cognitive behavioural therapy uses as its baseline people's normal behaviour with no implication that they are mentally ill, or in need of psychiatric treatment. It is delivered by psychologists because they are the experts in the field.