

- Chronic pain

Distinguishing and understanding types of pain

Panay News · 10 May 2022 · 7

PAIN IS one of the symptoms of every disease, trauma, and injury. It is one of the five cardinal signs of inflammation together with swelling, redness, heat, and limitation of motion. A person can have pain after injury, trauma, or disease, and its severity varies. But what is pain? Pain is an uncomfortable feeling or uncomfortable sensation in the body. It can be short-term or long-term and can range from annoying to debilitating.

The pain we felt in our body can be divided into different types, and timing, body areas, and characteristics are essential factors in distinguishing the types and nature of pain.

Pain that usually happens immediately is considered acute, while pain that happens repetitively, is considered chronic. Meanwhile, pain that is located in a specific area of the body is named localized, while pain that cannot be pinpointed is considered diffused or vague.

As to characteristics, healthcare professionals, such as physical therapists and physicians usually asked their patients for the characteristics or quality of pain to come up with a diagnosis. Different characteristics or qualities of pain such as sharpshooting, aching, burning, pulsating, electrifying, nagging, radiating, cramping, and squeezing, have been identified.

Pain can be divided according to the body system and body tissue damaged namely, the bone, nerve, internal organ, blood vessel, muscle, and other soft tissues. Trauma or injury to the bone will exhibit deepaching, nagging, or dull pain like in the case of fracture, whereas trauma or injury to the nerve exhibits electrifying, sharpshooting, burning, and radiating pain like in the case of disc herniation, spinal cord inflammation, and nerve entrapment.

Moreover, injury or trauma to the muscle will exhibit squeezing, cramping, and aching to a specific muscle area like in the case of bruise or muscle cramps; and lastly, blood vessel pain is characterized by throbbing or pulsating of the affected blood vessel-like in the case of headache and migraine.

When is the time to seek healthcare advice and medical consultation?

Pain that is longer than one week should be referred to primary health care professionals such as physicians and physical therapists for an assessment, additionally, those pain that does not respond to anti-pain medication should not be taken lightly and should be referred immediately.

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