

Hong Kong Pain Society President's Inaugural Speech

1. Good evening Dr Chow, Dr Leong, Honoured Guests, Distinguished Members of the Hong Kong Pain Society, Ladies & Gentlemen.
2. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you this evening to the inaugural dinner of the Hong Kong Pain Society. Today the 16 October, we also celebrate the IASP Global Day Against Pain. We are very honoured tonight to have Dr York Chow, Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, and Dr Leong Che-hung, Chairman of the Elderly Commission, Hong Kong, to share the evening with us.
3. Pain occupies a significant position in everyone's life. Most of us have experienced pain ourselves or in someone close to us, and we encounter it in our daily clinical practice. In many people persistent pain causes considerable hardship and suffering. Pain may affect their normal daily activities, impair their mood and sleep, and in some cases, maladaptive behaviour develops and takes over their lives. This has led prominent authorities and organisations to advocate that pain is really a disease entity in its own right, and that it should be treated as a disease and not as a symptom.
4. The economic cost of chronic pain conditions is enormous. The spiraling cost and its burden on health care resources are major issues that need to be addressed urgently at the highest level. The growing acceptance of pain as a major problem with prominent attention granted by some governments, politicians and healthcare bodies especially in the US, Europe and Australia, highlight the importance of pain in terms of its humanitarian, medical and economic perspectives. There is now data from local studies to indicate that pain is indeed a significant menace not only to the physical and psychological health of our community, but also to our healthcare services, social welfare system, and overall economic wellbeing. It is time for pain management to receive its appropriate and due attention in Hong Kong.
5. The "*Global Day Against Pain*" is an initiative of the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) with support from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Federation of IASP-Chapters (EFIC). The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of a different aspect of pain each year. The first "*Global Day Against Pain*" was held in October 2004 with the theme *Pain relief should be a basic human right*. Last year's it was "*Pain in Children*" and this year's theme is "*Pain in Older Persons*".

This is fitting because our elderly population is growing fast, and pain is a very common problem in this age group that is often under-treated. The Global Day kick starts a year of activities in many countries around the globe that focus on the theme. In the months to come, we shall organize public lectures and media interviews, seminars and workshops, to educate our community and healthcare workers in this and other topics of pain management.

6. Pain as a multidimensional and multifaceted condition often requires a multidisciplinary approach. This concept has inspired the formation of the Hong Kong Pain Society. The Hong Kong Pain Society being a multidisciplinary organization is a most suitable forum for exchanges among disciplines to promote local research and education on pain management. The Hong Kong Pain Society's first Council is well represented by members from the various medical specialties and healthcare disciplines including anaesthesiology and pain medicine, clinical oncology, neurology, orthopaedic surgery, palliative care medicine, rehabilitation medicine, rehabilitation science, clinical psychology, nursing specialty, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. I would like to express my gratitude to each and every member of Council and our Hon Legal Advisor, who had participated in the formation of the Society over the past six months. We have had many late nights together and thanks to your valuable time and enthusiastic contribution, the Hong Kong Pain Society has finally become a reality!
7. I also wish to welcome our new members. The last I counted, we have members from over 15 different medical specialties and healthcare disciplines. I look forward to your contribution and participation in the up-coming activities of the HKPS. Through our collective efforts I hope we shall be able to ease the suffering in our community.
8. Last but not least, I wish to thank and congratulate the Organizing Committee for arranging this meeting at such short notice. It is indeed highly commendable that they were able to organize this meeting in barely over three months. I am also grateful for all the sponsors of this event. I am sure we shall continue to work closely together, in our fight against pain. The Organising Committee has planned an interesting programme for us tonight. I hope you will have an enjoyable and rewarding evening. Thank you.

PP Chen
President Hong Kong Pain Society

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