

SYMPOSIUM COMMUNICATION AGAINST PAIN

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THE ART OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN PERSON -CENTRED PAIN MANAGEMENT –

Marijana Braš, Lovorka Brajković

PROJECT COMMUNICATION AGAINST PAIN

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Pain is the most common reason why people consult a doctor, but also the most common symptom indicating the onset of an illness or illness itself. Pain is the oldest evolutionary reaction of an organism to any kind of attack or destruction. Is pain a signal, a symptom, an emotion or an illness? Why do we feel pain? The cause can be physical, psychological, social or spiritual. Pain is a subjective feeling and it is not easy to measure it. Since no two people are the same, no two reactions to pain are the same. It is difficult, almost impossible to compare biologically caused pain with emotional, social or spiritual pain, but all of them can cause great suffering. Pain and comfort are closely connected, as a kind of a single continuum, and they are often divided only by a thin line. Regardless our viewpoint on pain, we all agree that pain is a dominant public health problem in the world which requires a multidisciplinary approach. Getting free from pain and suffering is a basic human right and a civilisational breakthrough of the 21st century which must not be limited by numerous prejudices or ignorance. Everybody should be involved in addressing this problem, because nobody should suffer in silence or die in pain. Modern science and clinical practice already enable us to significantly reduce pain and suffering regardless the cause and kind of pain. Pain should be prevented and a multidisciplinary approach should be used, because this problem is not reserved or meant to be dealt with by one profession only. Doctors, psychologists, social workers,

priests, scientists, philosophers, artists, pedagogues, as well as patients and members of their families should all be involved because we all communicate and need to recognise pain and suffering of the people living and working with us. One of the important principles of human existence is NOT to cause pain to oneself and others and we should use our knowledge to help those who suffer from it.

There is a strong and unbreakable bond between pain and art. Pain can really motivate us, warn us, and initiate a new way of expressing ourselves through a painting, composition, novel or song. Pain is often the bridge connecting, elevating, moving, collecting and unifying all the layers of human sensibility making us move, scream, show our existence and create and change something in pain. That's why, behind the pain, there is often pleasure of creating, pleasure the artist feels in his body and soul as a kind of unity of the biological, psychological, social and spiritual. How to describe the minor key of pain, since we assume major keys are defined by joy and pleasure? Which tonality is pain? Which colour and shape is pain? What is the movement of pain?

Many works of art have resulted from pain, which should be respected, but it also shows us that art should be used as a therapeutic technique for people who suffer from pain, as well as one of the most powerful ways of raising public awareness of

this problem. Art can also be one of the best forms of educating medical professionals and people working in government institutions who decide on the importance of recognising and treating pain.

These are the reasons why Center for Palliative Medicine, Medical Ethics and Communication Skills (CEPAMET) of the School of Medicine together with the Academy of Music, Academy of Fine Arts and Academy of Dramatic Arts of the University of Zagreb have decided to start the “Using Communication against Pain” project to point through different media to pain as an omnipresent world phenomenon and cause of human suffering. We, as humanists, need to and want to solve this problem. Our goal is to write a person centred book on pain treatment, start educational workshops, make a DVD with musical performances about pain, make a graphic map with works on pain and an educational theatre play about pain for medical professionals.

It is especially necessary to develop educational programs dedicated to challenging situations in communication (how to break bad news, conduct a family meeting, communicate about risks and prognosis, shared decision making and communication about end of life decisions). It is necessary to apply experiential learning methods with the constant use of feedback. During the symposium we will present possible models

for health professional education on the topic of good communication in person centred pain medicine, with the presentation of the medical interview, which was developed in CEPAMET. We will also present graphic map PAIN. Common goal of scientists, experts and artists is to build a bridge of cooperation and joint action to reduce human greatest suffering. Only our creativity and doing good will make us feel good. Do good – feel good.