

# PIG-NI NEWS

## Pain Interest Group Nursing Issues

NEWSLETTER  
July 2010

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"A sub-group of  
The Australian Pain Society"

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### CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

*It's hard to believe that we are half way through the year and well into the winter months. The annual PIGNI conference on October 29, is shaping up to be an outstanding meeting with some excellent speakers covering a wide variety of interesting issues including pain management in the day surgery unit, in the emergency department and the recovery room. A guest speaker from the Ambulance Service Dr Jason Bendall will be presenting a unique view of managing pain in patients prior to their arrival in hospital. Be sure to keep the date free in your diary.*

*One of our major projects lead by the PIGNI committee is facilitating the standardisation and development of pain forms for NSW. A consultative group of 59 health professionals representing 7 Area Health Services from NSW, have been collaboratively working on the PCA form which is now very close to completion.*

*Our monthly meetings have been extremely productive and we have been fortunate to have contributions from many pain management experts including Dr Stephen Gibson from Royal Prince Alfred and Dr Richard Halliwell from Westmead Hospital. Elizabeth Anderson a senior pharmacist also from Westmead, has been providing invaluable assistance in the development of the form, ensuring that aspects of prescription and drug information are accurately represented.*

*At every meeting there are at least 10 Clinical Nurse Consultants from pain management personally contributing their wealth of experience to the development of these forms. There is vast consultation via email where all correspondence is reviewed at the meetings.*

*The PIGNI committee is using funds to provide a tele-conference facility that is allowing individuals from rural areas including Tamworth, Dubbo and the Hunter to participate in the meetings via telephone. Look out for a draft copy of the PCA form...*

*Emily Edmonds*

### Do You Want to Join the Pain Interest Group - Nursing Issues (NSW)?

#### MISSION STATEMENT

The Pain Interest Group – Nursing Issues (NSW) is a group of health professionals committed to promoting and providing optimal care of patients with pain and its resultant effects. Education, research, advocacy and setting of standards of care are the mechanisms through which these goals are achieved.

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### IMPORTANT DIARY DATES

**Annual General Meeting**

**Committee Meetings**

**State Pain Forms Committee Meetings**

8th-10th October 2010

29th October 2010

29th August to  
2nd September 2010

29th April - 1st May 2011

12th-16th June 2011

Friday 29th October 2010, Le Montage Event Centre

July 26, Aug 23, Sept 20, Nov 22

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**Faculty of Pain Spring Meeting "Transitions in Pain"** Newcastle City Hall  
Details: <http://www.anzca.edu.au/fpm/events/2010-spring-meeting>

**4th Annual Conference PIGNI (NSW)** Le Montage Event Centre Sydney  
Details: [susan.lee@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:susan.lee@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

**13th World Congress on Pain** Montreal, Canada  
Details: [www.iasp-pain.org/Montreal](http://www.iasp-pain.org/Montreal)

**6th World Congress World Institute of Pain** Seoul, Korea Details [www.kenes.com/wip](http://www.kenes.com/wip)

**Australian Pain Society 31st Annual Conference** Darwin Convention Centre,  
Northern Territory, Australia Details: <http://dcconferences.com.au/aps2011/>

## Laughter is the Best Medicine!

Bronwen Williams - *Joyologist!*

Have you ever noticed how much better you feel after a good hearty laugh? Laughter is a whole body experience that stimulates, then deeply relaxes. What could be better to improve health and general well-being? A good belly laugh gives us an internal workout by massaging our internal organs, which improves blood circulation throughout the body, and increases the supply of fresh oxygen and nutrients to tissues. Laughter also improves the function of our immune system (which helps fight disease) - for example, the cold virus cannot enter the receptor site of cells when a substance called 'norepinephrine' is released through laughter. When we laugh, we also release 'endorphins', which are our body's natural narcotics, and essential to relieve pain.

Laughter relaxes the nerves and muscles - which is why we feel we might wet ourselves when we have a particularly hearty laugh!

For the past 8 yrs I have been running a business called 'Laughter Works Australia'. I am also involved with 'Laugh WA', and ran two laughter clubs in the Perth metro area before coming to Melbourne almost 5 yrs ago to do the same thing over here.

'Laughter clubs' were originally started by an Indian Doctor called Madan Kataria. Madan lives in Mumbai (previously Bombay). One day, in the late 1990s Madan started thinking about how strange it was that some of his patients recovered more quickly than others with similar illnesses. So, he began watching his patients more closely. He noticed that those who were generally happier and more positive seemed to complain less and required less drugs, whilst the ones who were often grumpy and more cynical, complained more about their pain - and everything else in their life - and required more drugs.

Madan Kataria began researching into Patch Adams - I'm sure most of you have heard of Patch. Patch uses humour and laughter in his hospital as part of his patients treatment and started the first 'Silly Hospital' ('silly' originally meant - good, happy, blessed, fortunate, kind and cheerful) in the world, called the 'Gesundheit Institute' well over 30 yrs ago.

One morning, after being inspired by the work of Patch Adams, Madan decided to get a few people together in a park near his clinic for some 'laughter therapy'. Five people turned up and after a few jokes and giggles, they all went on their way. It was nice, but not as good as Madan had hoped for.

They met daily, but after a week or so, the jokes got boring and a bit bawdy for the women. So Madan decided that from now on they would not rely on anything to make them laugh, they would just laugh for the pure joy of laughing - just 'laughing for no reason'. Within weeks the group expanded to several hundred!

And so, 'Laughter Yoga' (Hasya Yoga - the *yoga of laughter*) was born. - I am thrilled to say that now there are around 6,000 laughter clubs world wide. Often with many hundreds or even thousands (in India) of people 'laughing for no reason'. I don't know if any of you reading this have ever been to a laughter club here in Australia, but they can be hysterical fun.

'Laughing for no reason' may seem quite daunting, but if we can recall in our own lives, particularly when we were young and 'allowed' to laugh out loud in public, there were times when we did exactly that. You know, something happens and we get the giggles - then they get louder and become uncontrollable. After a while we can't even remember why we're laughing, and the more we try to stop laughing, the more we laugh!

Pretty soon we have a pain in our belly and get a 'stitch', but still we can't stop laughing. If we are with a friend and laughing together, we can't look at each other for fear we will just get started again.

We feel joyful and alive and have forgotten our worries!

And no wonder we feel so good, our brain has just pumped our bodies full of endorphins and serotonin, we are literally bursting with nature's happy drugs!

But in today's society it is just not 'done' to laugh out loud. We have to control ourselves and be sensible and behave like 'adults'. Well, in my world, adults can play too, and MUST. We want to, don't we? Don't we just love joining in with little children / grandchildren when they're

colouring in - particularly with crayons.

Laughter clubs are about tapping into this playful aspect of ourselves and laughing with pure joy ... *even if it's for just one hour a week.*

Being a person who has suffered chronic pain for 16 yrs, I can tell you from personal experience that laughter **works**. It not only distracts me from negative thinking when I am in an acute stage, but it alleviates my chronic pain. It also soothes my sadness of knowing I will be in bed for a few weeks again.

Smiling, in fact even faking a smile can do almost as much good as a big belly laugh! It's true, our brain can't tell the difference!

These days I use the time I am stuck in bed for a week or two now and then as a time to catch up on reading, writing funny stories, spiritual practice, meditation, or just being grateful in the knowledge that I will be able to get up at the end of it and walk again, when I know there are people in hospitals all around the world who are not so fortunate.

I have spinal injuries, arthritis, and epilepsy, so I know a lot about pain. I am also one of those people who cannot tolerate opiates of any kind, even synthetic ones. I have tried chyro, physio, spinal nerve root epidurals, exercise, hydrotherapy, pain clinics and heaps of other stuff, but none of those have ever worked more than 10%. So, I get acupuncture, I get osteopathic and cranio-sacral treatment. I also see a reflexologist, take supplements and herbs, and walk as much as I can when I am able to. But mostly I try to remember to smile, laugh, and giggle at myself and at life as much as I can - this works the best!

Fortunately I am a very, very good-humoured and positive person. I always attempt to see the funny side of everything. There is an old saying I love, it goes 'you'll laugh about this later'..... well, I think - *why wait, lets laugh about it now!*

Of course I am not saying that pain is funny, **definitely not**. But neither is it so very serious that we have to be wholly focussed on it all the time and let it sneakily steal our life away from us.

We are NOT our pain. It is NOT who we are, it is something *about us*, something we 'experience'.

So, put your 'brave' hat on, grab a friend and go along to a laughter club soon (google 'laughter clubs' in your state).

In fact, why not start a little laughter club in your own hospital - I come and train people to run laughter sessions in their workplaces! It has been my direct experience in running workshops for many years, that nurses have the best sense of humour!

\* Oh yes, and have a look at my website, you might find that a bit of a giggle too! [www.laughterworksaustralia.com](http://www.laughterworksaustralia.com)

*The most revolutionary act anyone can commit  
is to smile publicly!*

Patch Adams

### PERSON IN PROFILE



**Kellie Jackson**

CNC Acute Pain Service  
Albury Wodonga Health Service

#### Where do you work?

I work at the Albury Campus of the Albury Wodonga Health Service, formally Greater Southern Area Health. I have been a nurse for 14 years, 5 years on a surgical ward and 9 years as an Anaesthetic nurse in theatre.

#### How long have you worked in Pain Management?

I started working in pain management in October 2007. I worked 2 days in Pain (job sharing with another nurse who wanted to reduce her hours from full time), and 2 days in Theatre. I had Maternity leave for 7 months 08/09. Since September 09 I work Mon-Thurs in Pain, as my colleague has taken 12 months maternity leave. I also pick up the odd shift in Theatre.

#### What is your role?

I am a CNS for the Acute Pain Service. We are Mon-Fri 0800-1630