

Talking About Chronic Pain

Talking with others

Explaining what living with chronic pain is like to your family members, friends and those in your life may be difficult. This can be frustrating at times when others are not able to understand what you are going through.

Be patient and understanding with others. It may be just as difficult for others to understand how your psoriatic arthritis and chronic pain affect your daily life as it is for you to explain it to them.

Educate others about your conditions. Others may not understand what you are going through because they do not understand your chronic conditions.

Describe your day-to-day life. Explain the types of symptoms you experience and how your condition impacts your quality of life. This will help others to understand difficulties you experience and adjustments that may be needed for daily activities. Also, share your symptoms of chronic pain, how it feels and how it affects your emotional and mental health.

Explain the unpredictable. You may also want to discuss how your symptoms may change from day to day. Some days may be "good" days, while others may be more difficult. This may help others to understand when you are unable to attend events or when you need to cancel plans that were made in advance.

Know when to ask for help. Be honest with yourself and with others about how your chronic pain may be affecting your daily and physical activities. This may mean describing how difficult household chores or work responsibilities are for you to do. Letting others know will give them the opportunity to help or find ways to adjust.

Show thanks. Let your family members, friends and those in your life know that you appreciate their support. Their support could come in various ways from helping with tasks, listening to you and learning about your conditions or just acknowledging that your pain is real.

It may not always be easy for others in your life to understand what you are experiencing. But you can do your part to help them see what you are going through and how they can best support you.

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President's Message May 2022

The Psoriasis Association of Singapore (PAS) is a non-profit organization that aims to raise psoriasis awareness in Singapore and offer support for those with psoriasis. The PAS has served psoriasis patients in Singapore since 1982 and this year we will celebrate our 40th Anniversary! This is a significant milestone for the association.

With the relaxing of Covid measures in Singapore, we are excited that we can gather in larger numbers and have face to face meetings again. This year's Annual General meeting will be a physical event and I am excited that we can all meet up again. I do encourage you to attend the AGM. There will be a lunch talk just before the AGM so do join us for a time of learning and interaction and good food!

At this year's AGM, we are also looking to amend the Constitution of the Psoriasis Association of Singapore. The Constitution was written in the 1980s and there are sections that need a fresh update. We will be proposing the new Constitution at the AGM and hope that you can all attend to lend your support. We are also going to issue new membership cards at the AGM. The new card has a fresh modern look and we also looking at ways to improve the perks of joining the PAS.

Do sign up and join us for the talk and AGM. See you soon!

God bless,
Colin Theng

Helping people living with psoriasis.

Education talk on 12th Feb 2022 by Ms Sandra Sandu

The education talk was held at Eagle's Wing Loft on 12th Feb 2022.

Dr Koh Hong Yi, consultant Dermatologist, delivered the talk to members on Covid 19 vaccines and treatments for psoriasis patients.

1. What do you know about Omicron wave?

It is the biggest Covid-19 wave to land in Singapore so far. It is also more contagious compared to earlier variants.

Omicron spreads very fast. By some estimates, it is 10 times more transmissible than the original virus from Wuhan, and twice as transmissible compared to Delta variant.

2. How effective are our vaccines?

All our current vaccines (especially the mRNA-based vaccines) still provide protection against Omicron, although the degree of protection is reduced compared against the earlier variants. Of note, vaccination significantly reduces the risk of having severe Covid-19 disease. Some studies show a trend between more protection with a greater number of vaccine doses (booster) received.

3. Omicron appears to cause a milder disease compared to the Delta variant. Compared to Delta, patients who contract Omicron are generally younger, have less respiratory symptoms, are less likely to need hospitalization, stay shorter in hospital if they are warded, and are less likely to die from it.

4. Based on one study, the most common symptoms for Omicron are runny nose, headache, fatigue, and sore throat. Loss of smell and pneumonia seem to be less common.

5. Overall, having psoriasis by itself or receiving treatment for psoriasis (including oral medications and biologics) do not seem to alter the severity of Covid-19 disease.

On behalf of the members, I like to thank Dr Koh for the educational talk and Leo Pharma in sponsoring this event. Look forward to more in 2022.



Talking About Chronic Pain

How do I effectively communicate about chronic pain?

Talking with your health care provider

Pain is not something you have to accept; there are ways to manage your pain. It is important to know when to see your health care provider about your chronic pain. If you experience constant pain, speak with your health care provider about a pain management plan that would be most appropriate for you. Explain your symptoms. It is helpful to be as clear and specific as possible to help your health care provider understand the pain that you are experiencing. This should include:

- How does it feel? Some descriptions include burning, dull aching, sharp and shooting, stabbing, throbbing or tightening.
- How much does it hurt? You may want to use a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is no pain and 10 is extremely painful.
- Where is it? Is the pain in one area or does it travel to different areas?
- How long does it last? Does it come and go or is it always there?
- When does it hurt, such as in the morning or at night?
- What makes it better or worse such as physical activity, resting or other things you have tried to manage the pain at home?

Explain the impact on your quality of life. Your health care provider will be able to recommend what is most appropriate if you explain how your pain affects your daily activities and quality of life. Some things that you may want to discuss include whether you experience pain or difficulty when:

- Getting out of bed or getting ready
- Carrying out responsibilities at work or having to miss work
- Doing daily tasks or chores at home
- Not being able to do activities that you used to do

You may also want to use the following quality of life scale to help describe how your chronic pain is impacting your life.

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Measuring function and quality of life	
0 (Non-functioning quality of life)	Stay in bed all day. Feel hopeless, helpless or depressed.
1	Stay in bed most of the day. Have little to no contact with others.
2	Get out of bed, but not able or don't want to get dressed. Stay home all day.
3	Get dressed, but do limited activities. Have some contact with others.
4	Do activities at home with some struggle. No work or other activities.
5	Do activities at home. Minimal activities outside of home each week.
6	Go to work or other activities for limited hours each day. Take part in limited social activities each week.
7	Go to work or other activities for at least 4 hours each day.
8	Go to work or other activities for at least 6 hours each day. Take part in family life but limited social life.
9	Go to work or other activities each day. Take part in family life but limited social life.
10 (Normal quality of life)	Go to work or other activities each day. Take part in family life and social life.

It is also important to discuss the mental or emotional impact that your chronic pain may be having as well. This may include anxiety, depression or other mood changes. Studies have also found that anxiety, depression and stress may worsen pain.