International Therapeutic Pain Certification Program

Curriculum

Effective: August 2017
INTERNATIONAL THERAPEUTIC PAIN CERTIFICATE (TPC) PROGRAM

Program Director: Dr. Adriaan Louw

The ISPI International Therapeutic Pain Certificate Program is committed to developing biopsychosocial healthcare providers and clinician scientists around the world, taking aim at the current global epidemic of chronic pain. We seek to produce highly skilled practitioners who are critical thinkers, reflective, empathetic, and lifelong learners. Therapeutic Pain Specialist Certificate graduates will be practitioners grounded in the principles of evidence-based medicine and who are skilled in rapidly integrating that knowledge into their clinical practice.

Therapeutic Pain Specialist Certificate Program Objectives:

1. Provide an innovative and cutting edge educational environment consistently across all clinical settings and for all participants through integration of state of the art learning tools with advanced professional clinical practice.
2. Develop healthcare providers that value the principles of evidence-based practice and behave accordingly in their daily practice.
3. Develop practitioners skilled in the integration of pain neuroscience, graded motor imagery, clinical reasoning, pacing, graded exposure and behavioral change into a clinical decision-making framework for the treatment of patients with chronic pain.
4. Develop practitioners who confidently and professionally interact with colleagues and other healthcare providers (general physicians, surgeons, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, etc).
5. Develop interest in and promote life-long learning
6. Develop, teach and integrate an interdisciplinary approach to chronic pain with an intent to positively impact human suffering associated with chronic pain

Admission Requirements:

1. All healthcare providers must possess a current and valid license to practice in their respective profession. This license must not be under suspension, revocation, probationary status, or subject to disciplinary proceedings or inquiry. Non-licensed Rehab Technicians will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. If English is not the applicant’s native/first language, the language of common use in clinical practice, or language used in the applicant’s physiotherapy professional education, specified language proficiency requirements may be required.

Curriculum

The ISPI Therapeutic Pain Certification Program consists of 12 credit hours of online learning. The curriculum is designed to be completed in 6 to 12 months, however the student has up to 2 years (24 months) of active enrollment to complete the program. The curriculum consists of the following outlined academic courses:

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**ISPI 6410  Therapeutic Neuroscience Education  4 credits**

Teaching people about pain can have a therapeutic effect. This course is designed to update attendees on the latest evidence and clinical application of therapeutic neuroscience education for patients in pain. Current best evidence has shown that neuroscience educational strategies utilizing neurobiology and neurophysiology are able to reduce pain, increase function, reduce fear and catastrophization, and improve movement and change cognitions and brain activation during pain experiences. Therapeutic neuroscience education changes patient beliefs regarding their pain, thus reducing the threat of pain. This course will discuss the evolution of therapeutic neuroscience education, why neuroscience education is needed in patient care and, more importantly, the clinical application and implementation of therapeutic neuroscience education for patients with acute, sub-acute and chronic pain. Special features include various metaphors, images, examples and case studies explaining neuroscience to patients in pain. In addition the class will cover clinical issues such as compliance, pacing exercise and activity, incorporation of therapeutic neuroscience education with traditional movement based therapy, billing and insurance reimbursement concerns and delivering therapeutic neuroscience education in busy, time-constrained clinical environments. This class is a must for all professionals dealing with patients in pain.

**Course Objectives: At the end of the course the student will be able to or will have completed:**

1. Discuss the latest evidence for therapeutic neuroscience education
2. Demonstrate the clinical ability to apply therapeutic neuroscience education to clinical practice with the use of at least one metaphor shared in class
3. List at least half of the output systems discussed in class and their response in a chronic pain patient
4. List potential strategies to implement therapeutic neuroscience into clinic practice regarding time, staff, billing and traditional therapeutic treatments
5. Design a treatment plan for a chronic pain patient based on output system dysfunctions with correct pain neurophysiological reasoning behind the treatment with information provided in the course

**ISPI 6151a/b  A Study of Neurodynamics I & II  2 credits**

This two part course is designed to update participants on the latest evidence and clinical application of neurodynamics. Neurodynamics is the physical ability of the nervous system allowing it to move, slide, glide and accommodate human movement and function. Compared to more traditional manual therapy models focusing on joints and muscles, neurodynamics is new and vitally important in restoring normal movement and function. To understand the physical movement of nerves, neuroscience knowledge is explored to understand how pain works from a neurobiological and neurophysiological perspective. This course will discuss the latest research in the use of neurodynamic tests for examination as well as treatment. Mounting evidence supports the use of neurodynamics in various traditional orthopedic based disorders such as low back pain, radiculopathy, plantar fasciitis, lateral epicondylitis, whiplash associated disorders, neck pain, carpal tunnel, post-surgery, ankle sprains and more. The didactic coursework will prepare attendees for the weekend intensive lab sessions. Following the lab session on the weekend intensives, the course will conclude with the clinical application of the neurodynamic tests and treatments associated with the course. This course adds the important handling skills component for healthcare providers treating patients with pain.

**Course Objectives: At the end of the course the student will be able to or will have completed:**

1. Review current evidence and understanding of neuroanatomy and neurogenic pain related to evaluation and treatment of neurodynamics through attending lecture and reviewing course manual
2. Develop a clinical working knowledge of neurodynamics
3. Develop an understanding of the importance of physical testing and handling of people in pain
4. Be updated on the latest evidence, both biological and clinical trials, of neurodynamic tests and treatments in a variety of pain-related conditions
5. Differentiate neurodynamic treatment principles for various clinical examples based on lecture material and course manual in class discussion
6. Merge neurodynamic information and concepts into other paradigms of examination and treatments of musculoskeletal conditions
7. Develop a base knowledge of neurobiology to allow for practical tests, examination and treatments in weekend intensive lab sessions
Many patients seeking help for pain are simply “too hot to handle.” Modern pain science referred to this as allodynia and/or hyperalgesia. Nowhere is this more evident than Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS). Using CRPS as a template, this course will feature various aspects of CRPS including differences between CRPS 1 and CRPS 2, clinical presentation and diagnosis, current epidemiological factors and risks associated with the development of CRPS to discuss hypersensitization of the nervous system. In the last 10 years, knowledge of hypersensitization, including CRPS, has increased rapidly leading to new advances in physical treatment. Now patients with hypersensitization can not only be managed, but treated effectively and returned to normal function. In addition the three main pathobiological processes currently thought to be the main issues with CRPS, and general hypersensitization, will be discussed. These are aberrant inflammatory mechanisms, vasomotor issues and neuroplastic changes in response to pain. This class will feature an extensive review of treatments based on the latest evidence for treating patients with CRPS and hypersensitization. Included are graded motor imagery, sensory discrimination, graphesthesa and neuroscience education. Various examination and treatment techniques will be discussed allowing preparation for the weekend intensive lab sessions. This course is a must for healthcare providers working in a variety of clinical settings dealing with CRPS or any patients displaying a heightened sensitization to physical movement and handling.

Course Objectives: At the end of the course the student will be able to or will have completed.
1. Be able to understand the pathobiology of the development of hypersensitization in chronic pain
2. Be able to recognize the current criteria for the diagnoses of CRPS
3. Be able to identify bio-psycho-social factors associated with the development of hypersensitization
4. Be updated on the latest evidence based approaches for managing patients with hypersensitization
5. Be able to apply the information from the educational session into clinical practice
6. Increase sensory discrimination and proprioception to restore sensory and motor mapping
7. Develop a base knowledge of hypersensitization to allow for practical tests, examination and treatments in weekend intensive lab sessions

ISPI 6100INT TNE, Too Hot to Handle, Neurodynamics - Online Lab 1 credit
This 4-week self directed lab serves as the practical application of the neurodynamics and too hot to handle courses. During the first two weeks, attendees will practice and develop skills in the physical examination of a sensitized nervous system. Practical sessions focus on the main upper extremity nerves (median, radial and ulnar), trunk, head and lower extremities, including both lumbar and lumbosacral tracks. Practical sessions include identifying and palpating peripheral nerves, active and passive neurodynamic tests as well as treatments for the sensitive nervous system. Weeks three and four focus on desensitization of the nervous system. First, attendees will practice and learn easy-to-follow strategies to teach people about pain, including why they are so sensitive. This practical application of therapeutic neuroscience education will prepare patients for treatments aimed at desensitization of a hypersensitive nervous system. Prior to desensitization, attendees will practically test various aspects associated with sensitization, including laterality, two point discrimination, body diagram drawings, localization of stimulus and graphesthesa. Treatments will include retraining left-right discrimination, motor imagery/visualization, localization, sensory discrimination, graphesthesa and mirror therapy.

Course Objectives: At the end of the course the student will be able to or will have completed.
1. Locate and palpate peripheral nerves in upper limb and lower extremity on lab partners using course manual and with instructor assistance
2. Demonstrate upper limb, trunk, lumbar and lumbosacral neurodynamic tests performed on lab partners after demonstration from instructor(s) and with use of manual
3. Demonstrate upper limb, trunk, lumbar and lumbosacral neurodynamic treatments performed on lab partners after demonstration from instructor(s) and with use of manual
4. Choose appropriate neurodynamic test and treatment for clinical application to at least 1 of 8 written case studies presenting to class for discussion using course teachings and course manual.
5. Practice and demonstrate an ability to explain nerve sensitization to patients in pain
6. Skillfully perform sensorimotor testing of hypersensitization on lab partners using course manual and with instructor assistance
7. Practice and perform all the treatments associated with graded motor imagery on lab partners using course manual and instructor assistance

**ISPI 6154  Everything Hurts**

Many chronic pain sufferers are diagnosed with widespread, diffuse, and non-specific pain in conditions like fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, metabolic disorder and Lyme disease. Current neuroscience is pointing a shared mechanism of brain processing (pain neuromatrix) and significant alterations in biological systems such as the immune and endocrine systems in these patient populations. Collectively, these conditions affect approximately 5% of the population - or more than 15 million Americans. Research has shown that treatments such as cardiovascular exercise, strengthening exercise, membrane stabilizing drugs and education (especially cognitive behavioral therapy) is helpful in treating widespread pain. But how does it work? How can therapy help patients with widespread pain? This class will discuss the epidemiology and etiology of conditions like fibromyalgia as well as the current medical model for treating widespread pain and especially the deficiencies in this model. The class will focus on the new neuroscience view of widespread pain, including the brain’s processing of pain, nerve sensitization, neuroendocrine and immune changes in response to pain, changes in motor function, sleep and more. Evidence-based treatments such as therapeutic neuroscience education, aerobic exercise, pacing, graded exposure, goal setting and various other strategies such as relaxation, breathing and sleep hygiene will be discussed in patients with widespread pain.

**Course Objectives: At the end of the course the student will be able to or will have completed.**

1. Be updated on the latest evidence for treating widespread pain
2. Develop a greater understanding of the neuroscience, neuroendocrine and immune changes associated with widespread pain
3. Be able to explain widespread pain to patients utilizing therapeutic neuroscience education
4. Develop a comprehensive movement, pacing and graded exposure treatment plan for patients with widespread pain
5. Be able to apply all strategies and knowledge to clinical practice.

**ISPI 6110INT  Focus on Function - Online Lab**

In recent years, pain neuroscience from a therapeutic perspective, has gained considerable evidence, especially teaching people more about their pain. Current best-evidence shows that therapeutic neuroscience education improves pain ratings, function, pain catastrophization, physical movement and cost of healthcare utilization. Clinically there is a shift whereby more and more clinicians are gaining experience in teaching people more about pain. This, however, is a good starting point, but not the end-point. The ultimate expression of recovery is behavior change, or return to physical confidence. Following the initial pain education, clinicians now need to embrace and impart additional strategies such as goal setting, pacing, graded exposure and behavioral change leading to a functional, empowered patient being able to resume a fulfilled meaningful life. This course bridges the gap from initial pain education to independence. Through lectures, case studies, group discussions, clinical application and motivational interviewing, clinicians will develop skills aimed at true behavioral change.

**Course Objectives: At the end of the course the student will be able to or will have completed.**

1. Advance their knowledge and clinical ability to perform therapeutic neuroscience education
2. Problem solve various barriers to reconceptualization regarding therapeutic neuroscience education
3. Utilize motivational interviewing and goal setting to develop a structured plan of care to foster behavioral change
4. Develop and implement pacing and graded exposure of various daily activities and exercise to people with persistent pain
5. Identify, discuss and address issues related to fear-avoidance and kinesiophobia for people recovering from pain-related fear and limited function
6. Develop strategies to apply course material into clinical practice
ISPI 6155  Perioperative Therapeutic Neuroscience Education  1 credits
This course class will examine lumbar surgery and knee replacements from a neuroscience perspective, including why so many patients suffer with pain after surgery, patient beliefs about surgery as well as how surgeons prepare patients for surgery. This class will feature an extensive neuroscience education section, which will help patients prior to surgery, immediately post-op and subsequently in the acute and sub-acute postoperative phase. Preoperative education has shown some effect in altering anxiety, stress and fear associated with surgery. This preoperative neuroscience education program created by physical therapists has recently been developed and has not only shown immediate post-education improvements in psychometric measures, beliefs and expectations for surgery and physical movements, but also a significant reduction of brain activity associated with painful tasks in patients scheduled for lumbar surgery. Additionally, preoperative neuroscience education has shown superior outcomes following surgery compared to patients receiving traditional surgeon led education in regard to back pain, leg pain, fear, catastrophization, function and postoperative healthcare utilization. Spinal surgery and knee replacements in the US are increasing. Outcome data indicates nearly 40% of patients experience persistent pain and disability following lumbar surgery. Postoperative rehabilitation following lumbar surgery has shown little efficacy in decreasing postoperative pain and disability, and it has been shown that patients are typically not sent to physical therapy following lumbar surgery. For knee replacements, recent studies have highlighted the issues of central sensitization associated with knee arthritis and knee replacement, which has pain scientists now developing a similar pain-science approach to knee replacements. This class introduces participants to the development of the preoperative neuroscience education program, the content, delivery methods and clinical application of such a program for lumbar surgery, as well as the adaptation and utilization of a new knee replacement program. The educational model will then be discussed within the realms of a postoperative movement based approach to exercise and range of motion.

Course Objectives: At the end of the course the student will be able to or will have completed.
1. List two reasons why a new bio-psycho-social treatment approach is needed to address pain in lumbar surgery and knee replacements.
2. Define the steps in the development and validation process of the preoperative neuroscience education program for lumbar surgery patients and now knee replacements.
3. Articulate the use of the content and delivery methods for the preoperative neuroscience educational program for use with preoperative lumbar surgery patient during the clinical application time in class.
4. Articulate the use of the content and delivery methods for the preoperative neuroscience educational program for use with preoperative knee replacement patient during the clinical application time in class.
5. Restate the general findings of the research showing preoperative neuroscience educational treatment program produces superior results to the biomedical model utilized by US spine surgeons for patients undergoing lumbar surgery.
6. Integrate the majority of the concepts from the therapeutic neuroscience educational session into clinical practice to fellow participants utilizing case scenarios.

ISPI 6156  Business of Chronic Pain  1 credits
This course combines two worlds – pain science and business. It is estimated that more than 80 million Americans are affected by some form of chronic pain. This number is ever increasing. This increase of chronic pain is associated with increased utilization of healthcare dollars and added burden on healthcare providers, including physical therapists. All of this is in lieu of healthcare reform. Emerging research into neurophysiology and neurobiology of pain clearly shows that movement and bio-psycho-social professions such as physical therapy are ideal to treat these patients. The increase in chronic pain and general dissatisfaction by patients with care provided creates a unique business opportunity for physical therapists. Additionally, advanced therapeutic treatments for pain, such as therapeutic neuroscience education, graded motor imagery, pacing, graded exposure, exercise and more will become increasingly desirable due to its low cost and it’s empowerment of the patient. This course will focus heavily on the use and clinical implementation of pain sciences in various therapeutic realms such as private practice, outpatient rehabilitation, inpatient acute care, large hospitals, etc. Course work includes marketing chronic pain to healthcare providers, third-party payers and patients, time-management, compliance, home-exercises, staff development, development of a pain program, billing documentation, outcome measures and more. The evidence
for pain science is ever-increasing, but has to be “taken to the clinic.” This course is a must for everyone interested in helping people in pain clinically.

*Course Objectives: At the end of the course the student will be able to or will have completed.*

1. Understand the epidemiological issues associated with chronic pain, including increased patient dissatisfaction
2. Develop an understanding how the pain epidemic is impacting clinical practice, including economical issues and burnout
3. Be updated on the latest evidence and understanding of how a movement, bio-psycho-social and neuroscience approach is needed to take assist patients with persistent pain
4. Be updated on the contents of a best-evidence pain management program
5. Identify opportunities for the development, implementation and marketing of such a pain program to other healthcare providers and the public
6. Utilize material, strategies and concepts from the pain certification to develop pain programs in a variety of clinical settings and patient populations
7. Apply the information from the educational session into clinical practice

**ISPI 7180 TPC Program Capstone**

This capstone course consists of the final project which serves as the final examination process for Therapeutic Pain Certification Program students. TPC students will complete a comprehensive capstone project given by the Program Director to demonstrate competency in selected pain science applications.