

# CO's CURE

## Physiology of Pain

Eighty percent of all physician visits include the complaint of pain and over one-third of primary care visits are for the primary complaint of pain. Yet pain is often undertreated. Poorly managed acute pain may cause serious medical conditions, impair recovery from injuries or procedures and/or progress to chronic pain

### The Nature of Pain

#### What is pain?

“Pain is whatever the person experiencing it says it is, existing whenever and wherever they say it does.”

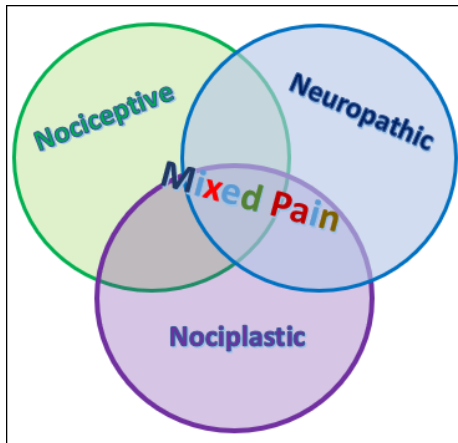
– Margo McCaffery

**Acute Pain:** Develops suddenly and can usually be diagnosed and treated. Acute pain is self-limiting or confined to a given period.

**Chronic Pain:** Persists or progresses over a long time is ongoing and usually lasts longer than six months.

**Acute on Chronic Pain:** Acute pain flare superimposed on underlying chronic pain.

#### What are the different types of pain?



**Nociceptive:** *Typically*, acute pain lasting less than three months. Signals are sent to the brain by receptors, and the body reacts with inflammation and dull, heavy, aching pain that spreads over a wide area. Most common type of pain.

**Causes:** injury to body tissue to the skin, muscle, and bones

**Examples:** postoperative pain, bruises, burns, fractures, overused joints

**Neuropathic:** *Typically*, chronic lasting more than six months. Pain caused damage to the central nervous system causing varying degrees of pain sensations from numbness to burning, stinging, and pricking.

**Causes:** viral infections, nerve trauma, neuralgia

**Examples:** arthritis, migraine, shingles, sciatica

**Nonnociceptive/Nonneuropathic, now known as Nociplastic:** *Typically*, chronic pain that is caused by abnormal processing in the central nervous system. However, there is no known reason for the abnormal processing.

**Causes:** unknown etiology

**Examples:** fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome

(Kosek, 2016)

**Mixed Pain:** Mixed pain share common clinical characteristics of all three types of pain: nociceptive, neuropathic and nociplastic.

**Potential Examples:** sciatica, cancer pain, lumbar spinal stenosis, (Freyenhagen, 2019)

**What are the best treatment options?**

[CO's CURE Hospital Medicine Pain Pathways](#)

The goal of pain management is to provide symptom relief and improve an individual's level of functioning.

A thorough pain assessment is the first step to identifying the best treatment.

Pain is best managed using a multi-modal pain therapy approach found in the CO's CURE Hospital Medicine Pain Pathways.

