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E-MENTAL HEALTH IN PRACTICE

## Non-Pharmacological Management of Chronic Pain – Podcast Summary

**Moderator:** Dr Jan Orman. **Guests:** Dr Simon Holliday, Dr Toby Newton-John, Dr Regina Schultz  
Based on Webinar 19 in the eMHPrac Webinar Series for Health Professionals available at [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/eMHPrac](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/eMHPrac)

**What do we mean by “chronic pain”?** Pain that persists for *3 months or more* after tissue damage is healed.

### What causes pain to persist after tissue injury is healed?

- Adequacy of pain management in the first week after injury
- Psychological impact of the trauma and injury and pre-injury psychological health
- Gender
- Educational level
- Compensation issues

**How big is the opiate problem in Australia?** Dr Simon Holliday, rural GP with a special interest in addiction medicine, says the problem of prescription opiate misuse is very big, especially in the rural sector in Australia. He describes some of the consequences of opiate misuse and the ways in which patients and their GPs contribute to the problem.

**What are the important elements of non-pharmacological management of chronic pain?** Clinical Psychologist Dr Toby Newton-John says management must include:

- Psychoeducation and goal setting
- Activity management
- Addressing unhelpful beliefs and cognitions about pain
- De-arousal (relaxation) techniques
- Plans for managing flare-ups of pain
- Communication skills for important relationships
- Sleep hygiene
- Acceptance of their own role in pain management

**How are these things translated into an online program?** Dr Regina Schultz, a clinical and neuropsychologist from the Reboot Program at THISWAYUP (<https://thiswayup.org.au/how-we-can-help/courses/chronic-pain/>) describes the way in which the principles of face-to-face pain management have been translated to the online context. MindSpot Virtual Clinic’s Pain Management Program (<https://mindspot.org.au/pain-course>) is also briefly described