



The Australian Pain Society

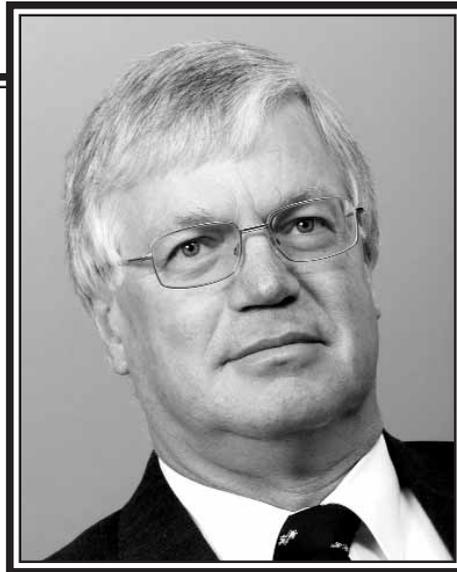
2009
*Distinguished
Member
Awards*

Awarded for services to the promotion,
treatment and science of pain management
and lifelong contribution to the
Australian Pain Society.

Dr David Cherry spent his medical undergraduate years at Adelaide University where it was his intention to follow in his father's footsteps and become a GP. He went to England in 1971 to do some anaesthetics and gynaecology in readiness for life as a rural GP. However a change of Government forced his hand into specialising in Anaesthetics out of the Birmingham region. There he was introduced to obstetric epidural analgesia by Selwyn Crawford. On returning to Australia he pursued his interest in regional anaesthesia and after obtaining his FFARACS in 1976, took a specialist posting at the Veteran's Hospital, Daw Park. This not only furthered his interest in regional analgesia, but also in the history of the world wars!

Dr Cherry became a visitor to the developing Pain Management Unit at Flinders Medical Centre, where he was eventually appointed Director in 1982 - a position he held until April 2008 when he handed over the reins to Dr Dilip Kapur.

At Flinders, he worked closely with Dr Geoff Gourlay and Dr John Plummer on research projects which led to development of the epidural portal access system, initially for use in managing severe pain related to cancer. Much of the early pharmacokinetic research into spinally administered opioids was performed in Dr Cherry's Unit. This extended to the use of implanted intrathecal catheters and pumps and the Unit became acknowledged as a centre of excellence for implanted



David Cherry

MBBS; FFARACS; FANZCA;
FFPMANZCA

spinal devices. As a result of the significance of the opioid receptors in the dorsal horn of the spinal cord, he developed an epidural infusion test to assess opioid responsive pain.

Research in the Unit revealed a relationship between the blood level of an opioid and the degree of pain relief in acute post operative pain. His further research showed a similar relationship in chronic pain (both malignant and non malignant) between blood

level and degree of analgesia and he developed the concept of a minimal blood opioid concentration.

David was interested in the harmful effects of pethidine administration and the unpredictable pharmacokinetics of methadone. This interest lead him to develop a sustained release morphine product in co-operation with FH Faulding, a South Australian based company with demonstrated expertise in sustained release pellet technology with erythromycin and theophylline.

Consequently Australia's first pharmaceutical product to reach the international market, Kapanol®, was launched. With Dr Geoff Gourlay, Dr Cherry toured extensively and gained an international reputation for the Pain Unit members as leaders in opioid pharmacology.

David performed as Secretary of the developing Australian Pain Society, 1982 - 1986, Vice President, 1991 - 1994 and President, 1994 - 1996. He was the Australian Pain Society Bonica Lecturer in 1989, has

authored many research papers and chapters and has spoken extensively both nationally and internationally over more than 20 years.

Following the sudden illness of Prof Izzy Pilowsky in 1989, David took over as Chairman of the Local Arrangements Committee for the 1990 IASP Meeting in Adelaide. In 1995 he was made an Associate Professor at Flinders University, in recognition of his teaching and research in Pain. David has brought together and directed a very successful group of multi-disciplinary experts in the area of pain management and has established, under the directorship of Dr Dilip Kapur, a successful outpatient pain management program aimed at injured workers (COPER).

David has maintained many interests outside medicine during this time. He is married with 4 children, one of whom is a physician trainee in Sydney. He has represented Australia and South Australia at golf and South Australia at bridge. He has been President of the Australian Golf Union, is a member of the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews and is currently Vice Chairman of newly formed Golf Australia. He has a vineyard where he is chief labourer with no expertise in making or sampling wine.

It could be said that David became an anaesthetist by an accident of history which then led to his interest in pain management. At the beginning of his career, pain management was a grossly under-researched area of medicine. It presented a fertile field of endeavour that he took up with gusto and success.

