



Australian Pain Society

2020 DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD

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





A/Prof G David Champion AM MBBS, MD, FRACP, FFPMANZCA

Associate Professor G David Champion AM has had a singular career. Well-known for his clinical evolution from rheumatologist to clinical pharmacologist to pain physician. In adult, and especially paediatric spheres, what distinguishes David is his remarkably long-term involvement in research while working full-time in private practice – a very uncommon combination in the modern era. As a private practicing physician, it was brave and costly to spend long hours on unpaid research. However, David is the first to acknowledge that his achievements and publications reflect collaboration and teamwork. Less than 10% of his personal contribution to research since 1975, almost 140 listed publications, has been funded externally; the remainder has been pro bono.

David established the modern Department of Rheumatology at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, in 1974. Having trained also in paediatric rheumatology in the UK and the USA, David began a Paediatric Rheumatology Clinic at Prince of Wales/Sydney Children's Hospital in 1975, collaborating with Prof John Ziegler and Dr John Feller, and continued that for about 35 years.

In 1986, David founded the Pain Research Unit at Sydney Children's Hospital. The early focus of this group was primarily children's

self-report and behavioural measures of pain intensity. Its first publication, in 1990, introduced the internationally acclaimed *Faces Pain Scale* which became a classic citation - the third most cited publication in paediatric pain between 1975 and 2010. The derivative paper, developed in collaboration with Canadian colleagues, established the international standard of paediatric pain measurement (The Faces Pain Scale – Revised: toward a common metric in pain measurement. *Pain* 2001; 93:173-183). Over many years, the team used the needle pain model for examining child and parental influences on children's pain outcomes. Children's ability to draw distinction between pain-related anxiety and pain intensity was considered. The team found parental influences on pain-related distress following immunisation injections to be strongly evident as early as four to six months of age, and that brief parental guidance could improve outcomes. Under David's leadership, the now internationally recognised Unit's research interests diversified into areas such as twin studies in paediatric pain, children's attention and distraction, information provision, somatosensory testing in children, and pain and the family. He was a co-convenor of the 6th International Symposium on Paediatric Pain in Sydney in 2003.

In 1998, David was awarded a Doctorate in Medicine from the University of Sydney on the basis of his published work in the pharmacology and therapeutics of rheumatic disease – again achieved from outside hospital – or university-based academic structures. In 1999, he was inducted as a Foundation Fellow of the Faculty of Pain Medicine of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists. Since 2003, he has held a conjoint appointment as Associate Professor in the School of Women's and Children's Health at UNSW Sydney. In 2008, David retired from adult medical private practice, maintaining a medicolegal practice in pain medicine that – characteristically – has also spawned a research component.

This long-standing clinical and research activity has been the source of David's prolific presentations at Australian Pain Society (APS) meetings over more than three decades, on topics varying from the measurement and assessment of pain in children, to the Repetitive Strain Injury ("RSI") phenomenon in adults, to the relationship between growing pains in children, adolescent pain, and restless legs syndrome in adults. In fact, his first publication on growing pains was in 1985. In the past five years alone he has been author or co-author of approximately 40 presentations at national and international conferences, particularly in paediatric pain medicine. Such is "retirement"!

David has been a member of the Australian Pain Society since the early 1980s – probably

the first rheumatologist in Australia to do so – reflecting his recognition that rheumatology and general medical paradigms were inadequate to explain the painful conditions experienced by many of our patients. About this time he and colleagues were confronted with the "RSI" phenomenon – then a mysterious cervicobrachial pain syndrome, now recognised as an example of nociplastic pain. David's was one of the few voices at that time to challenge – successfully – the notion that the problem was primarily psychosocial in nature. In 1988, he became a member of the International Association for the Study of Pain and served as an officer of its Special Interest Group (SIG) on Pain in Childhood from 1990 to 1994. It is no surprise that David has been a member and supporter of the APS Pain in Childhood SIG since its inception in 2011.

David Champion has been one-of-a-kind during a long career characterised not only by sustained activity and enthusiasm, but also by a willingness to search for and adapt to new knowledge and thinking, when so easily he might have followed more conventional paths. Few have contributed so broadly to the field of Pain Medicine, both clinically and in research. In 2018, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to medicine in the field of paediatric rheumatology and to medical research and treatment of musculoskeletal pain. He is indeed a Distinguished Member of the Australian Pain Society.