Pain is best understood through a biopsychosocial framework, and an assessment process identifying these pain contributors is essential. This applies to all pain; in particular, management of persistent pain should be based on a biopsychosocial approach.

The literature into the treatment and management of pain conditions consistently demonstrates that approaches addressing biopsychosocial contributors are more likely to be successful. In some circumstances, a sole clinician may be able to address the breadth of pain contributors. However, interdisciplinary care is the gold standard for the management of persisting pain, and is always encouraged. The literature also shows that treatment approaches focusing only on reducing pain intensity are less likely to be successful than those also addressing pain-related distress and disability. A multidisciplinary team approach is more likely to deliver outcomes sought by the person experiencing pain.

Interdisciplinary care is more than simply having multiple professions. Rather, it is the integration of knowledge, collaboration and shared expectations and goals by the team that defines its co-ordinated nature. The International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) defines interdisciplinary care as “a biopsychosocial approach to assessment and management that involves a team of health care professionals working closely together within a non-hierarchical framework”.

The Australian Pain Society recommends that all pain conditions be managed with treatment approaches aspiring to the provision of interdisciplinary care.

*Approved by the Australian Pain Society Board, August 2017*