

Annex A – Singapore and the region's only Multidisciplinary Paediatric Pain Committee and Children's Pain Management Clinic

Paediatric Pain Committee

The multidisciplinary Paediatric Pain Committee comprising nurses, doctors, allied health professionals and administrators across various disciplines and departments, have been working together since 2014, to achieve an 'ouch-less' hospital.



Source: KK Women's and Children's Hospital

The above framework, conceptualised by its Chairperson, Dr Siow Yew Nam, Head and Senior Consultant, Department of Paediatric Anaesthesia, KKH, has the child and the family member in the centre of all we do. The three main sources of painful experiences in focus are:

- 1) Surgical pain
- 2) Non-surgical and complex pain
- 3) Procedural pain

The outer circle and its interconnected elements represent all the components needed to build a system that is ChildKind.

The Committee is guided by the framework to:

- Review and make recommendations in the development of standardised paediatric pain assessment tools, effective pain management, and documentation.
- Enhance knowledge and research utilisation of the multidisciplinary health care team in regards to paediatric pain assessment and management.
- Provide leadership and consultation in designing and implementing activities and services that promote the importance and effectiveness in pain management in children.
- Support best practices associated with paediatric pain management.



- Act as a resource and consultant to Administration and Risk Management in formulating strategic plans for paediatric pain management initiatives in clinical practice settings and the established paediatric services within the hospital.
- Serve as a consultant for critical analysis and evaluation of research findings to guide and improve paediatric pain management.

Children's Pain Management Clinic

International data shows that chronic pain affects up to 40 per cent of children up to 18 years, and can significantly impact a child's daily functioning, causing difficulties with sleep, school attendance, mood and engagement in family routines and hobbies. Affected children tend to withdraw from social situations, and feel frustrated, isolated, and misunderstood.

Chronic pain is a highly specialised field. Established in 2005, the Children's Pain Management Clinic (CPMC) works as an interdisciplinary unit comprising a specially trained physician, nurse educator, physiotherapist, occupational therapist and psychologist, to assess, diagnose and manage chronic pain in children.

Compared to five years ago, awareness of chronic pain in children has increased tremendously amongst healthcare professionals. In 2021 alone, the clinic received about 130 referrals, double the number from 2019. The most common complaints include daily headaches, recurrent abdominal pain, or persistent musculoskeletal pain, which may be accompanied by giddiness, fatigue and other symptoms. Mental health issues like anxiety and depression are also commonly associated.

At CPMC, patients would likely have had experienced pain that persisted beyond three months, and seen other specialists to rule out other underlying medical conditions. The first consultation comprises a detailed interview, history taking, and examination by the team before a plan for therapy is discussed and agreed upon.

Parental support for the therapeutic process is key, and while therapy can take some time, the children and their parents are supported by the team throughout.