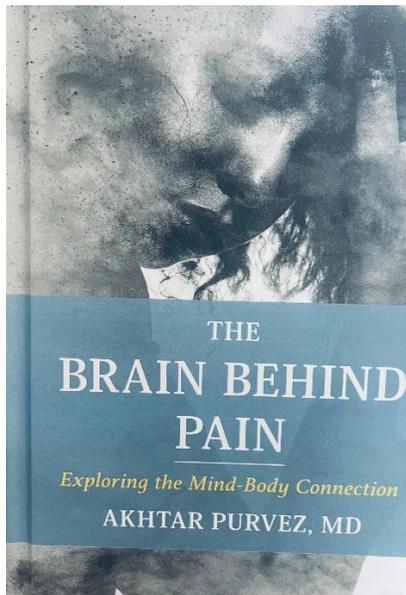


BOOK REVIEW

PAIN MANAGEMENT



The Brain Behind Pain - Exploring the Mind-Body Connection

Author: Akhtar Purvez, MD

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Chronic pain is a part and parcel of human existence. As medical science makes phenomenal advances in combating disease, including chronic pain, it finds new ways to persist in our consciousness. Dr Akhtar Purvez's new book provides insight into anatomical, physiological and psychological aspects of pain. Readers will understand what causes pain, how it is felt and transmitted, and then modified/modulated in the peripheral and central nervous system, including the brain. And the social and cultural conditioning that impacts it.

The author is a pain physician, researcher and pain policy advocate who practices interventional pain medicine in the university city of Charlottesville, Virginia. His first book *Managing Chronic Pain in the Age of Addiction* should be a logical first effort at understanding various

dimensions of chronic pain including the epidemic of drug overdose deaths. The book under review adopts a multi-sided approach in explaining various obvious, and not so obvious, dimensions of pain.

He explores, and illustrates the deep connection between pain and psychological constitution. The book goes the extra mile in outlining the relationship and various factors impacting on, and between, pain and addiction.

The book is divided into ten chapters. Each chapter explores and expands on a different aspect. Beginning with 'The Mystery' of pain, the author concludes his book with what the future holds. In the first chapter, we get an exhaustive overview of the history and philosophy of pain. Interesting to note that in the ancient times pain required the attention of a high priest, not a physician. We learn that Hippocrates was the first physician to rationalize pain and use it as a diagnostic tool to assess the severity of illness. Moving through the centuries, it was the discovery and understanding of nociceptors, the highly sensitive neurons, activated whenever something threatened tissue damage that brought humans closer to understanding pain.

Each chapter in this book opens a path for the reader to understand the diverse and complex factors related to chronic pain. The chapters like cultural aspect of pain, the apparent anomalies in pain conditions and other aspects are navigated with expertise but presented with a view to make this knowledge understandable.

Chapter 9 addresses 'Keeping Pain in Mind', and is written by Dr. Mudhasir Bashir, MD.

Clinicians and other professionals managing chronic pain, the patients and their families will find the information useful.

At the end is a chapter of selected bibliography, which provides an extensive resource of pain related books and scientific research papers published in international journals. It is followed by a chapter of 'Notes'.

Speckled with anecdotes, history and lively examples, the book is intensely readable.

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