Invitation:
Unravelling Pain Together
Patient centered transdisciplinary pain neuroscience education
Amarins Wijma

Which will take place online on Monday, February 1 2021 at 18.00

Promotors:
Prof. dr. C. Paul van Wilgen,
Prof. dr. Jo Nijs,
Dr. Doeke Keizer

Exam commission:
Prof. dr. Filip Van Ginderdeuren,
Prof. dr. Cindy Veenhof,
Prof. dr. Rob Simoens,
Prof. dr. Annelies Matthijs,
Prof. dr. Tom De Vleeschouwer
Whether we want to or not, pain is an inevitable part of life. On average twenty percent of the western population suffers from chronic pain. When one is in chronic pain centrally mediated mechanisms, also known as central sensitization, play an important role. Especially in chronic pain it is known that biopsychosocial factors provoke and contribute to the pain one experiences. As a result, multifactorial cognitive behavioural (CBT) treatments are advised. Within this treatment Pain Neuroscience Education (PNE) plays an important role. In the current dissertation an outline of such a treatment for patients with chronic pain, by means of patient centered transdisciplinary PNE as integration in the CBT for patients with chronic pain is explored.

The first part of this dissertation focuses on physiotherapists. The first aim was to summarize and theorize the existing literature of patient-centeredness within physiotherapy. Therefore, we conducted a systematic qualitative literature review. From these studies a synthesis of interrelated themes ("individuality", "communication", "education", "goal setting", "support", "social characteristics of a patient-centered physiotherapist", "a confident physiotherapist", "knowledge and skills of a physiotherapist in patient-centeredness") and a proposed conceptual framework of patient-centeredness in physiotherapy was constructed.

The second aim was to aid physiotherapists by describing a patient centered biopsychosocial assessment for physiotherapists encountering patients with chronic pain. Based on a narrative review an outline of the clinical biopsychosocial assessment, the PSCEBSM-model, was delineated.

The second part of the dissertation seeks to find an in depth understanding of the process of patient centered transdisciplinary PNE. The third aim was to study and theorize the experiences of patients with chronic pain who recently received transdisciplinary PNE. Following Grounded Theory four interacting topics, comprising subthemes, emerged: the pre-Pain Neuroscience Education phase", "a comprehensible Pain Neuroscience Education", the "outcomes of Pain Neuroscience Education" and "scepticism".

The fourth aim was to comprehend the social phenomenon of transdisciplinary PNE. Therefore, based on Constructive Grounded Theory we conducted an observational qualitative study. Four connected and interactive themes were found to be of importance with three overarching themes: "generating a safe and comfortable feeling, situation" as a perquisite, "the PNE process", "the process of change of the respondent" leading to the fourth theme "outcome of the change process". With overarching themes: the "influence of changeability of the respondents", "interplay between the healthcare professionals" and "communication skills of the healthcare professionals". And the third and last part of this dissertation investigates the when and how of changes following a transdisciplinary CBT pain management treatment. A bottom-up retrospective quantitative observational study investigated the moderating effects of pain catastrophizing on the relationship between illness perceptions and self-reported signs of central sensitization in patients with chronic pain, following a transdisciplinary CBT pain management treatment. The results indicate that even though there is an association between pretreatment and change scores in illness perceptions and self-reported symptoms of central sensitization in patients with chronic pain, moderation of both pretreatment and change scores of pain catastrophizing was not present.

With this dissertation we hope to have unraveled some of the aspects surrounding PNE and further spark the treatment of patients with chronic pain. Especially in regard to patient centered-working, the therapeutic alliance, the assessment based on the PSCEBSM-model and an interactive education within a (transdisciplinary) CBT setting.

ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH

CURRICULUM VITAE

Amarins Wijma (Born February 17th 1987) is a physiotherapist who obtained her Master of Science degree in Clinical Health Sciences, Physiotherapy Science, at the Utrecht University Medical Center in 2013. In March 2014 she started her PhD The Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium. Amarins has co-authored several chapters in (inter) national books. Furthermore, she has authored 8 SCI-indexed full text papers of which she published 5 as first author. Her research has been presented on several national and international congresses. She is a member of the international ‘Pain in Motion’ research group. Besides her PhD Amarins has continued to work in clinical practice. Furthermore, she has taught, and continues to teach clinicians working with patients with long-term pain on the management of chronic pain.