



# Pain MANAGEMENT

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP • ORTHOPAEDIC SECTION, APTA, INC.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Joe Kleinkort, PT, MA, PhD, CIE, DAAPM

In the last decade there has been a tremendous decline in the ability of people to get the therapy they need. This has been caused by the rise in control held by insurance companies and managed care. With reimbursement on the decline and lack of approval of adequate rehabilitation for various conditions, our health care system continues to create greater chronicity in the aging adult populous. The future insures that with this significant lack of caring for the patient up front that a greater number of people will suffer from an ever growing number of chronic conditions that therapists will ultimately be called upon to manage. As therapists it is our responsibility to prepare for this onslaught of a new and more difficult patient population to address.

There are new and exciting tools that are finally being approved for use in this country after nearly 3 decades of use in other countries around the world. The laser is one of these tools. The laser has properties that set it apart from other photostimulators. I have enjoyed the clinical use of lasers in my practice since 1980 with tremendous results. Since this issue of *Orthopaedic Physical Therapy Practice* is dedicated to new tools in orthopaedic practice, I must say that although this tool has been accepted in the world for over 25 years it has just recently received FDA approval in this country.

There is nothing that can replace the manual skills and knowledge that come with long and exacting study in the area of orthopaedics. Laser, however, is one of those tools that can radically improve a practitioner's outcomes and speed of delivery. Laser use is wide and varied in chronic and acute pain management as well as the industrial setting. The physiological effects are well documented.

With the ever increasing need to shorten times in rehabilitation and improve on outcomes, the laser is one powerful tool that can be used by the clinician to enhance improved outcomes.

As a profession we must embrace new technology with cautious optimism and bring it into our plan of action. After returning from a recent trip to China, I am reminded how truly blessed we are in this country but also how we must meet change with vigor and determination in our professional areas. We must continue to strive for the ideals that

brought us to this profession and touch others lives who are in pain in a very positive way. Embrace change therefore and make a difference in other people's lives with the new technology that is there for us to utilize.

Finally, we are still looking for papers to publish in the area of chronic pain. Please forward these to me at [indusrehab@aol.com](mailto:indusrehab@aol.com) and I will make sure that we include them in upcoming issues. This is your voice and let that voice be heard.

## PAIN MANAGEMENT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP BOARD LISTING

### PRESIDENT

Joseph A. Kleinkort, PT, MA, PhD, CIE  
303 Inverness  
Trophy Club, Texas 76262-8724  
PH: 817-491-2339 • FX: 972-887-0294  
[indusrehab@aol.com](mailto:indusrehab@aol.com)

### VICE PRESIDENT

John E. Garziona, PT, AAPM  
PO Box 451  
Sherburne, NY 13460-0451  
PH: 607-334-6273 • FX: 607-334-8770  
[jgarziona@juno.com](mailto:jgarziona@juno.com)

### TREASURER

Scott Van Epps, PT, PCS  
45 Wapping Ave  
South Windsor, CT 06074-1345  
PH: 860-545-8600 • FX: 860-545-8605  
[svanepps@cox.net](mailto:svanepps@cox.net)

### SECRETARY

Elaine Pomerantz, PT  
20 Brookwood Road  
South Orange, NJ 07079  
PH: 973-575-1112 • FX: 973-575-1369  
[smokeyman@aol.com](mailto:smokeyman@aol.com)

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