

# painmanagement

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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#### Highs and Lows

Anyone who is acquainted with me knows that one passion I have is flying a small aircraft. In flight training, we are taught to look for high and low weather pressure areas, anticipate them, and to adjust the altimeter accordingly. The altimeter must be set to the current barometric pressure to get a fair idea of the altitude that the plane is flying. If the altimeter is set too high, then the plane is lower than the pilot thinks which leads to a sudden and unexpected contact with the ground. Memory aides are recited to remember what to do before something bad happens. ("High to low, look out below, etc.") The purpose of this type of training is to minimize high stress times in the cockpit to make every flight safe and fright free (at least for the pilot).

Clinical practice for the pain management physical therapist also goes through periods of highs and lows on a daily basis; however, our professional training does not truly prepare us for this. I say to my clinical students that "the highs and lows in pain management would make the roller coaster at Six Flags seem like a merry go round." Some patients who come to the clinic have been in significant pain for years, are depressed, weak, and angry. They have been to numerous medical doctors, therapists, and nontraditional practitioners (the low). They don't seem to have a snowballs chance in Hades for improvement and yet amazingly enough, they improve and return to successful functioning in society (the high). Then there are those who are not as involved or disabled (the high) try as hard as they can, and still show little functional improvement despite the heroics and latest evidence based treatments (the low).

The Pain Management Special Interest Group is dedicated to improve treatment of pain and to bring the latest theories and techniques to all of the members. We have had excellent educational programming at CSM, but I would like to embark on a new program of periodically sending blast emails to our members of interesting recent studies that have been published in other related journals. If you are not a member of the SIG, you can contact the Orthopaedic Section and request to be a member. There is no cost for this service.

Will this undertaking eliminate the highs and lows of clinical practice? No, but it will help give us more techniques to use on our more difficult patients and to anticipate the 'highs and lows' better.