

Four Decades Later: Revision of the IASP Definition of Pain and Notes

The currently accepted definition of pain was originally adopted in 1979 by the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP)

1979 Definition of Pain

An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage

2020 Revised Definition of Pain

An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with, or resembling that associated with, actual or potential tissue damage

In 2018, IASP constituted a 14-member multi-national task force with expertise in clinical and basic science related to pain, which sought input from multiple stakeholders to determine:

“Does the progress in our knowledge of pain over the years warrant a re-evaluation of the definition?”



Expert consultants

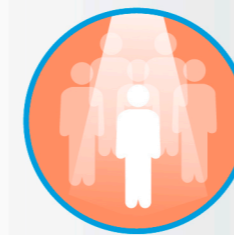


IASP council

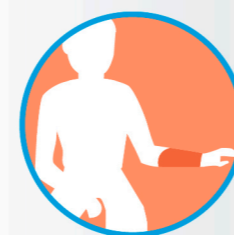


The public

2020 Revised Definition of Pain Notes



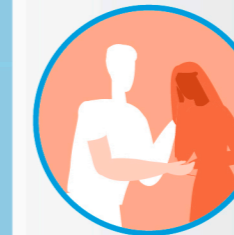
Pain is always a personal experience that is influenced to varying degrees by biological, psychological, and social factors



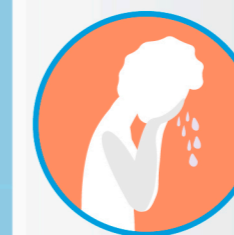
Pain and nociception are different phenomena. Pain cannot be inferred solely from activity in sensory neurons



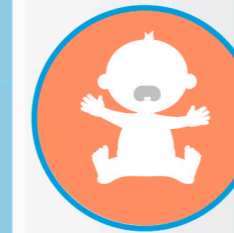
Through their life experiences, individuals learn the concept of pain



A person's report of an experience as pain should be respected



Although pain usually serves an adaptive role, it may have adverse effects on function and social and psychological well-being



Verbal description is only one of several behaviors to express pain; inability to communicate does not negate the possibility that a human or a nonhuman animal experiences pain

The revised IASP definition of pain: concepts, challenges, and compromises

Raja et al. (2020) | Pain

DOI: 10.1097/j.pain.0000000000001939

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