

The spirituality of chronic pain and neurological disease

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Over the course of a lifetime in clinical neurology and well documented in the literature that those who pay attention to the human dimension of pain and suffering and have the means and resources for spiritual and psychological care, do better in terms of outcomes. I have been interested in the spiritual dimension of pain and the way ethnic, cultural, social and religious variables affect the outcome of syndromes with the identical pathologies. I will be presenting cases that reflect the need to pay more attention to the way we frame illness and disease, since the narratives we obtain from patients often move us in the wrong direction. I claim that were we open spaces for the patient to reflect upon the human effect of disease in their lives and relationships, we might be better equipped to manage chronic pain and neurological disease in other ways than merely the pharmacological. In doing so, we also open ourselves to

vulnerability and difficult philosophical questions referred to the meaning of suffering, theodicy etc. We therefore need to be equipped with our own spiritual tool kits to deal with such issues. The need for further data as to the efficacy of strategies addressing the human dimension of pain and suffering is urgently needed.

Speaker Biography

Julian Ungar-Sargon teaches Health Sciences at Harrison College in Lafayette and works in full-time clinical practice that includes interventional pain management and neurology. He serves the Hoosier State in the Indiana Guard Reserve (MAJ) as Executive Officer (XO) and Commander of Physician Company of the 19th Medical Regiment. The goal on this command is to develop a rapidly deployable mobile medical unit to respond to terrorism, mass casualty, chemical and biological terror, protecting the citizens of Indiana. He was awarded the Merit of Honor medal by the OSMTH order of Templars in 2013 for medical service to the indigent of Indiana. He was Awarded Indiana's Highest Civilian Award, the Sagamore of Wabash in 2016 by Gov. Pence.

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