



# COMMON PAIN CONDITIONS

A CLINICAL  
GUIDE TO  
NATURAL  
TREATMENT

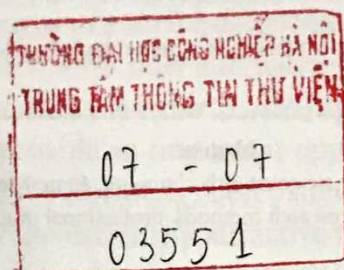
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# COMMON PAIN CONDITIONS



## A CLINICAL GUIDE TO NATURAL TREATMENT

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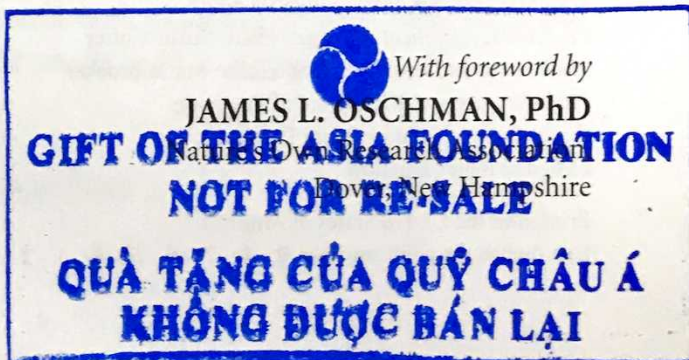
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# Foreword

Pain is probably the most prodigious problem facing modern medicine. Consequently, this compendium is one of the most important medical books available today. The treatment of pain is a daunting challenge in the practice of medicine, which has led to outcries for safer alternatives that work for pain. Fortunately, complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) approaches to pain have been maturing steadily and now provide an important opportunity to fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the (formerly) best pain drugs. The CAM approaches not only work very well, they are extremely attractive to patients. There are important reasons for the effectiveness and attractiveness: these approaches gently, effectively, and inexpensively treat the causes of pain, which is the opposite of approaches that mask pain.

The level of detail and scholarship in this volume is truly remarkable. Such a richly rewarding and easy-to-read resource could only come from a research physician with a background in medical anthropology and forensic medicine. The book is also very readable and fascinating. It is a book unlike any I have seen! Do a test for me: pick any chapter at random and read a bit of it. I predict that you will be enthralled and that you may not be able to put it down.

An attitude that has slowed the clinical application of CAM approaches is the widespread belief among physicians that there is no scientific basis for them. This attitude may have had some justification years ago, but the situation has changed dramatically. Remember the words of a great American sage:

*All generalizations are false, including this one.*

—Mark Twain

This book is a remarkable compilation of the research basis for a wide range of CAM approaches, which include literally thousands of individual treatment modalities not taught in medical schools. Here you will find a snapshot of the burgeoning scientific literature on CAM. Many of the CAM methods actually have better scientific support than a large percentage of the methods routinely used in hospitals as standard care. The *British Medical Journal* analyzed common medical treatments to determine which are supported by sufficient, reliable evidence. They evaluated approximately 2500 treatments, and the results were as follows:

- 13% were found to be beneficial.
- 23% were likely to be beneficial.
- 8% were as likely to be harmful as beneficial.



- 6% were unlikely to be beneficial.
- 4% were likely to be harmful or ineffective.

This analysis left the largest category, 46%, as unknown in their effectiveness. In other words, when you take your sick child to the hospital or clinic, there is only a 36% chance that he or she will receive a treatment that has been reliably, scientifically demonstrated to be either beneficial or likely to be beneficial (Dossey, Chopra, & Roy, 2010).

A huge turning point in pain management came on October 1, 2004, when one of the world's most widely used pain medications, Vioxx, was withdrawn from the market by its manufacturer, Merck, because of concerns about increased risk of heart attack and stroke associated with long-term, high-dosage use. This action was the largest prescription drug recall in history. Worldwide, more than 80 million people had been prescribed Vioxx at one time or another. Merck voluntarily withdrew the drug after disclosures that it had improperly withheld information about the risks from doctors and patients for over 5 years, resulting in between 88,000 and 140,000 cases of serious heart disease. The value of shares in Merck plummeted, and several manufacturing facilities had to be closed. Soon several other extremely popular nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) were also withdrawn from the market. The ensuing congressional investigations led to the public admission by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that they do not, in fact, have the means to evaluate the toxic side effects and other dangers of new drugs, as the public had widely believed.

The FDA is criticized from many different perspectives (Hawthorne, 2005). Public statements are nearly always harshly critical to the point of blame and outrage from organizations that have long argued that the FDA impedes the advancement of medical science and practice. For example, there is a widely held belief that the pharmaceutical industry "rules" the FDA. Whether or not this picture is accurate, such appearances of conflict of interest are very destructive to the image of the FDA and to the vital spirit of medical innovation.

*Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfills the same function as pain in the human body. It calls attention to an unhealthy state of things.*

—Winston Churchill

The FDA is one of the most powerful government agencies when it comes to health and medical practice, and it has a key role in protecting the public health by ensuring the safety, efficacy, and security of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, medical devices, the food supply, cosmetics, and products that emit radiation. This scope represents a vast bureaucratic enterprise, with all its inherent limitations, yet remains crucial to the future advancement of medicine and affects public health worldwide. The FDA employs thousands of scientists and other staff, many of whom are competent and dedicated. With a budget of about \$4 billion, the FDA is responsible for oversight of more than \$2 trillion in foods, medications, medical devices, cosmetics, dietary supplements, and other consumer goods. Given the criticisms of the FDA bureaucracy and its key roles in protecting the public



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