

Wednesday 10 March 2010

14:00-15:00

Cogito, ergo ouch: meditations on the psychology of pain
Professor Mick Sullivan, Professor of Psychology and Medicine
Mc Gill University, Montreal, Quebec

Dr. Michael Sullivan is currently Professor of Psychology and Medicine at McGill University, and Scientific Director of the University Centre for Research on Pain and Disability. He has lectured nationally and internationally on the social and behavioural determinants of pain-related disability. He is known primarily for his research on the relation between catastrophic thinking and pain experience, and for the development of community-based approaches to the management of pain-related disability. Dr. Sullivan has published over 100 scientific papers, 12 chapters, and 4 books. He currently holds a Canada Research Chair in Behavioural Health. Dr. Sullivan obtained his undergraduate training at McGill University and his graduate training at Concordia University in Montreal.

Over the past two decades, pain catastrophizing has emerged as the most powerful psychological predictor of pain outcomes. Individuals who obtain high scores on measures of pain catastrophizing experience more intense pain, are more likely to develop mental health difficulties and show more pronounced pain-related disability. Recent research also shows that pain catastrophizing is a prognostic indicator for poor surgical outcomes and poor response to analgesic medication. This presentation will provide a brief summary of what is currently known about the negative impact of pain catastrophizing, and the mechanisms by which pain catastrophizing influences pain outcomes. The presentation will also describe novel interventions designed specifically to target pain catastrophizing in order to improve the health and mental health outcomes of individuals suffering from persistent pain.