

Translator's Preface to Korean Edition of
"The Gunn Approach to the Treatment of Chronic Pain"

In this book, Dr. Gunn presents us a new concept, the neuropathic pain and the Intramuscular Stimulation Therapy (IMS). Both of neuropathic pain and Intramuscular Stimulation Therapy may be alien to almost all Korean readers.

There are many patients around us, who wander from hospital to hospital in a quest for relief of their chronic pain. In these hospitals. Doctors check such high-tech tests as CT and MRI, but in almost all cases they cannot find any structural abnormality. So, many patients brings CT and MRI films like souvenir photos to next hospital and then next hospital. Then, do they have no problems really? And, there are many patients who have no relief of pain even after removing their disc through operation. Do the disc have been removed properly? Or, have the disc been the cause of the pain really?

Various treatment modalities we use, especially the disc surgery, are not effective at all, and failed method in many cases. If surgery is superior to conservative care, surgery should bring more patient to previous job earlier and need less money. But, in reality, if there is more surgery, there are more work loss, loss of more money and more disability. Traditionally, we have believed in the myth that the compressed nerve root causes pain and the decompression surgery removes pain.

But, simple nerve root compression does not cause pain. First, in many experimental and clinical conditions of nerve root compression, the initial symptom is not sharp pain but abnormal sensations like paresthesia and numbness. Second, compression and ischemia of nerve root causes injury at not A delta and C fiber that transmit pain but thickly myelinated nerve fibers first. Even in 1958, Chanley pointed that "the most surprising fact in acute low back pain is that the degree of organic change in the disc is not correlated with severity of the pain". Nachemson have even said that "lumbago cannot be treated by physicians and physical therapist but only politician can do it".

Dr. Gunn presents us a definite answer of neuropathic pain and intramuscular stimulation therapy to this enigmatic problem. Dr. Chan C. Gunn is the medical manager of The Gunn Pain Clinic and The Institute for the Study and Treatment of Pain in Vancouver and the Clinical Professor of the Multidisciplinary Pain Center of the University of Washington in Seattle. He developed the idea of neuropathic pain and the method intramuscular stimulation therapy (IMS) through the experiences of the Workers' Compensation Board of the British Columbia. IMS looks similar with traditional Chinese acupuncture in many aspect, but IMS is not based on the yin yang theory or Chinese philosophy. His method of IMS is firmly based on scientific ground such as anatomy, neuroanatomy, neurophysiology and neurobiology, and belongs to western Orthodox medicine.

He and his clinic members see and treat patients only on referral bases, and his clinic is used as an educational places. But if you visit the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Pain (ISTOP), you will be startled because ISTOP is a simple and concise place. We have thought that we should use complicated, expensive, high-tech equipments to treat patient well. But he uses only hands-on technique but his method is more effective than any kind of sophisticated high-tech equipment.

Masan 1998 Kwang Hwi OK