**Refractory Cancer Pain**

Pain Management Units, palliative care services and primary care providers work collaboratively in supporting the management of complex pain in cancer patients who may benefit from referral to a Pain Unit if:

- the pain is not adequately managed by appropriate oral and/or parenteral analgesics
- they are having unacceptable side-effects from the medication
- they have movement-related pain that is difficult to control
- they have specific conditions which may benefit from neurolytic blockade (pancreatic cancer), or neuropathic pain involving major neural plexus or peripheral nerve infiltration requiring intrathecal infusion therapy.

**Information Required**

- Type of cancer, progression and prognosis
- Description of the pain, its site and radiation
- Current treatments and outcomes of previous trials of therapy
- Patient’s expressed wishes with regard to treatment and NFR status
- A plan for care after discharge if the patient is from a rural community or a residential care facility.

**Investigations Required**

- If procedure or implanted catheter may be indicated, CBE, U&E’s, CRP and infective screen including MSSU.
- The results of any recent spinal scans
- CT or sagittal MRI views should also be available.

**Fax Referrals to**

- Repatriation General Hospital Outpatient Clinic Fax: 8277 9476

**Red Flags**

Red flags should prompt immediate GP referral to **Emergency Department**

- Recent and unanticipated onset of new pain, numbness or weakness in the arms or legs
- The onset of new difficulty with bladder or bowel control

**Suggested GP Management**

- If the patient does not have regular contact with a palliative care consultant and the care is being managed by a general practitioner or specialist palliative care nurse, the treating professional is encouraged to seek advice from a palliative care consultant or a member of the Pain Management Unit Team to facilitate an early review as patients with refractory cancer pain will get priority access

**Clinical Resources**


General Information to assist with referrals and the and Referral templates for FMC and RGH are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients)