Chronic generalised or Chronic back pain

Definitions
- Fibromyalgia (FM): generalised arthralgia and myalgia commonly associated with alldynia, fatigue, poor sleep pattern and psychological distress of at least 3 months duration. FM may occur with rheumatological, psychological or other conditions.
- Chronic back pain (CBP): longstanding mechanical back pain

Differential diagnoses to consider
1. FM: hypothyroidism, vitamin D deficiency, chronic arthropathy or myopathy, connective tissue disorder, drug withdrawl eg. Corticosteroids, depression, paraneoplastic syndrome
2. CBP: see red flags

Note: May not need to see a rheumatologist unless there are atypical features

Information Required
- Specific indication for referral at this time
- Duration of symptoms, History of trauma, psychosocial evaluation
- Physical examination findings, alldynia, sleep pattern
- Therapies trialled/opinions sought up to this point

Investigations Required (FM)
- CRP
- ESR
- CBP
- ECBFTs
- TSH
- Vitamin D
- CK
- serum protein
- electrophoresis

Fax Referrals to Rheumatology Outpatients
Flinders Medical Centre (RGH) Fax: 8204 6105 (Clinic B)
Repatriation General Hospital (FMC) Fax: 8374 2591 (GP Liaison)

Red Flags
- FM: does NOT cause elevated inflammatory markers, fever, weight loss or objective signs of joint or muscle disease
- CBP: high inflammatory markers, night pain, history of malignancy, constitutional symptoms, acute on chronic back pain

Suggested GP Management
- FM:
  - Exploration of psychosocial issues
  - Encouragement of physical activity eg. Tai Chi, moving in warm water, aerobic exercise
  - Emphasis on self-management
  - Down play medical model
  - Consideration of amitriptyline 10-50mg NOCTE for sleep hygiene, duloxetine if mood disorder or pregabalain for pain
- CBP:
  - simple analgesia, weight management, emphasis on physical therapies, avoidance of opiates
- Clinic discharge criteria: after adequate explanation and education

Clinical Resources
- Education (Arthritis Australia – Moving Towards Wellness Course)
- www.rheumatology.org.au/community/PatientMedicineInformation.asp

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