

PD PROFILE

DR LYNN BARDIN, APAM, WILL PRESENT A ONE-DAY COURSE IN FEBRUARY TO GIVE CLINICALLY RELEVANT LOW BACK PAIN RESEARCH UPDATES.



What can participants expect from attending the course?

Participants can expect to engage with clinically focused, updated and expanded low back pain (LBP) research translation to clinical practice. This will directly affect clinical competence to diagnose and treat LBP. Included elements are:

- evidence-informed clinical reasoning for diagnostic triage and differential diagnosis of LBP
- updates regarding red flags as diagnostic cues for serious spinal pathology
- clinical syndromes and advanced palpation of the lumbar spine and pelvis
- biomechanics and clinical anatomy of the lumbar spine and pelvis
- exercise prescription including envelope of function, patient adherence, adaptations for structural pathology and research-informed illustrated exercise sheets.

What was your motivation behind creating the 'Advances in back pain diagnosis and exercise prescription' course?

Evolution of this course has a long and interesting history. In 2012, my role as a NPS educator for LBP for general practitioners in Victoria provided firsthand insights about the challenges GPs face in back pain diagnosis and management. GPs were highly appreciative of evidence-informed discussions and particularly valued clinically relevant LBP research papers provided as a resource in relation to problematic clinical aspects of LBP. Although all guidelines recommend a triage process to diagnose LBP, the literature appeared to lack a comprehensive review detailing diagnostic triage for LBP.

Managing my patients with LBP over many decades, researching the field of exercise for chronic LBP during my master's degree and undergoing advanced research training at Melbourne University motivated me to address the

classification conundrums and diagnostic inconsistencies in the literature. With input from Dr Peter King, an interested and knowledgeable GP, and from Professor Chris Maher, FACP, the research steadily progressed. Our combined efforts culminated in a narrative review, 'Diagnostic triage for low back pain: a practical approach for primary care' that was published in the *Medical Journal of Australia (MJA)* in 2017. Statistics from the *MJA* indicated it had hit a 'sweet spot' with the medical profession. It became the most popular review paper for the year. This work inspired the first component of the course, and a focus on diagnostic triage for back pain, which would educate physiotherapists to be on the same page as the medical profession with regard to LBP diagnosis, classification and management.

The second course component emphasises the clinical utility of clinical anatomy, palpation and biomechanics of the lumbar spine and pelvis. I have taught anatomy at Melbourne University for many years, a great advantage since anatomy is of seminal relevance to the 'bio' in the biopsychosocial model of LBP. Clinical anatomy has been defined as the application of the discipline and scientific principles of anatomy to the comprehension and solution of problems that occur in clinical practice. Knowledge in these fields has a positive impact on our clinical reasoning, decision-making and patient management from diagnosis to discharge.

The third component of the course focuses on practical ways to implement exercise prescription for back pain. This should be a key tool for all physiotherapists who manage patients with LBP. Nothing is quite as rewarding as empowering a patient to discover that appropriately prescribed exercises can lead to non-pharmaceutical reduction in pain and improved quality of life.

Who is the course aimed at and who will benefit most from attending?

This course provides a clinically focused, evidence-informed foundation for all physiotherapists who diagnose and treat LBP. Entry to mid-level, as well as advanced physiotherapists, will benefit from recent research translation to clinical practice. The course includes clinically relevant theory (eg, lectures on diagnostic triage, biomechanics and research underpinning exercise prescription), but the emphasis is on clinical application to the challenges encountered in the world of real patients.

'Advances in back pain diagnosis and exercise prescription' course will be held in Heidelberg, Victoria, running from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm on Saturday 23 February 2019. To register, visit physiotherapy.asn.au.

Dr Lynn Bardin, APAM, is a consultant spine physiotherapist and has a PhD in physiotherapy. She works in Melbourne at SUPERSPINE and the Austin Hospital, teaches anatomy at the University of Melbourne and assists with LBP education for GPs, physiotherapists and other health professionals.