



MEDICAL UNIVERSITY
OF VIENNA



Vienna Healthcare Group
University Hospital Vienna

Exhibition

Art • Action • Attitude

Pain

(2022/23)

Renate
Mowlam



A Global Perspective on the Phenomenon of Pain

How was and is pain managed in the past and today, what does palliative care mean, and what is the situation regarding the global supply of pain medication? Here, we want to give you an understanding of all of this. As always, a critical, cosmopolitan perspective of the named topics is essential.

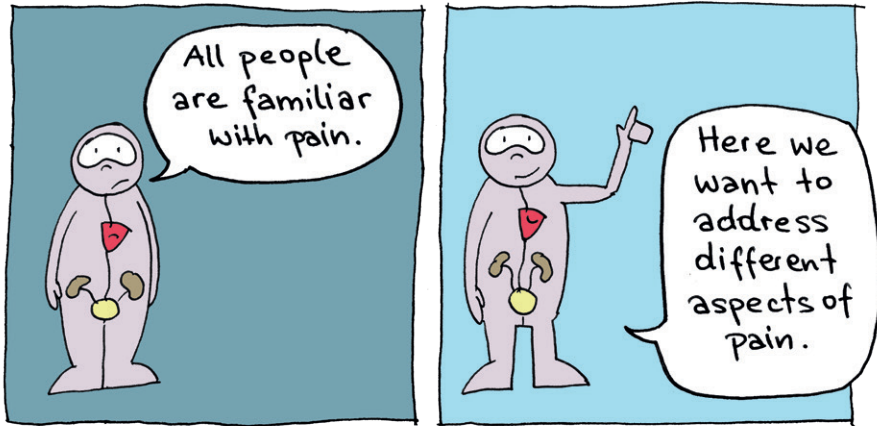
Pain is an important sensation that protects and warns us. For pain caused by severe illnesses or accidents, medication exists, the basic substances of which have been long known. Access to this medication, however, is global highly unequal. While we in most countries in Europe have a good to very good supply, this often does not apply to poor countries. There, even people with severe illnesses, also children, have no or only little access to pain medication. Although it is a fundamental human right!

In the exhibition year of 2022/2023, **Art • Action • Attitude** is focusing on “pain”. This time, we will get together in a team of three to discuss and arrange these topics: comic artist Renate Mowlam, palliative doctor Eva Masel, and medical anthropologist Ruth Kutalek.

The Editors



Pain



Globally,



the access
to treatment

The opioid crisis



in the USA

Palliative care,



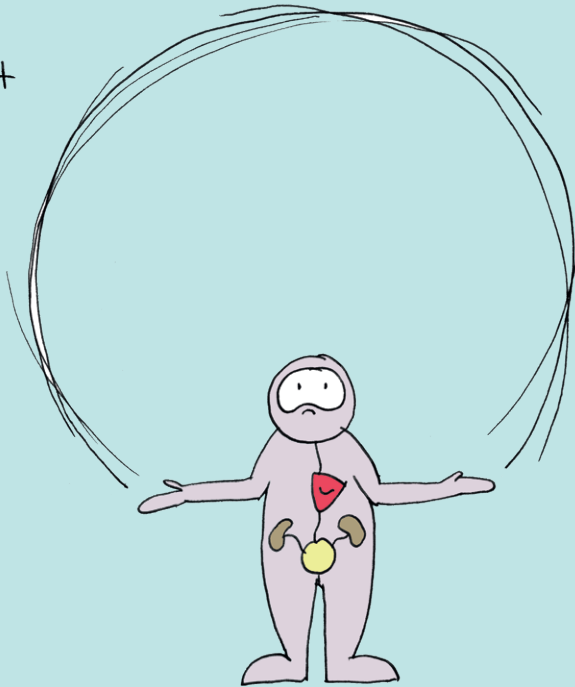
the treatment
of pain

Historically,

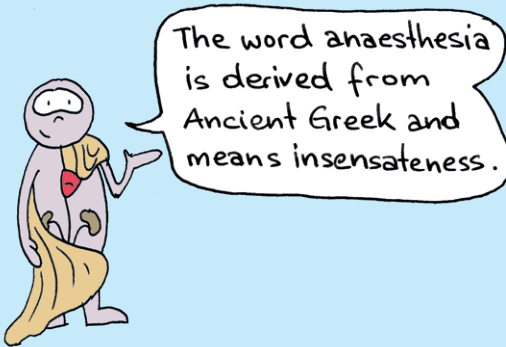


the history
of anaesthesia

Expressing
pain

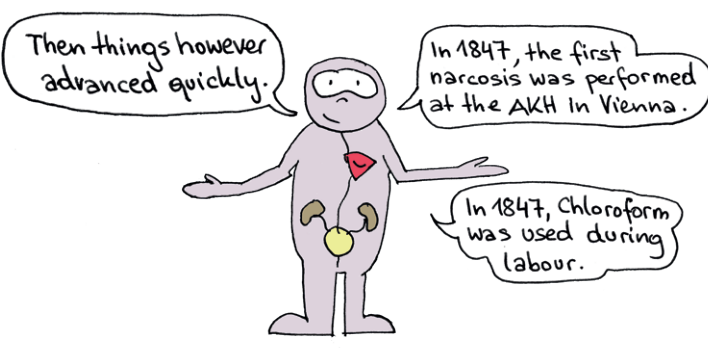
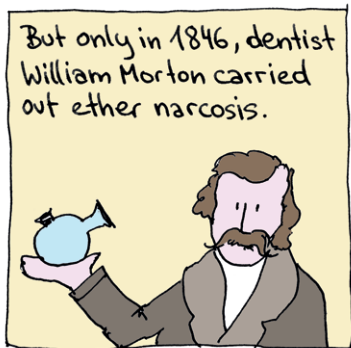
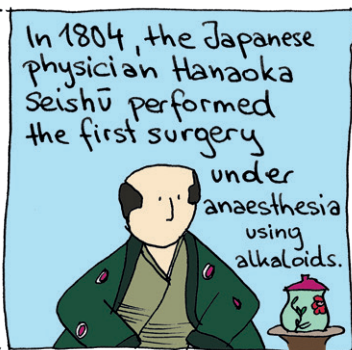
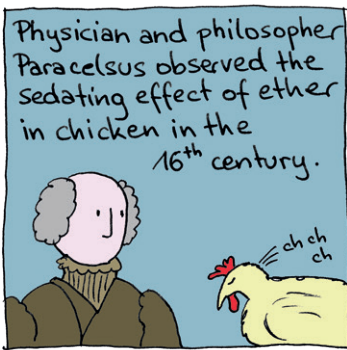
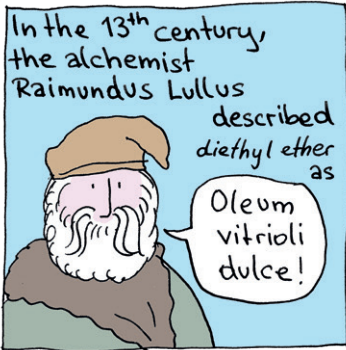


The History of Anaesthesia



Anaesthesia
- numbness -
is used
for the treatment
of pain, diagnostics,
and surgery.






Palliative Care






Global supply of pain medication


The access to pain therapy is a fundamental human right!



However many millions of people worldwide do not have access to pain medication.



More than 5.5 million Cancer patients...
...and more than 1 million HIV/Aids patients have to suffer untreated symptoms.

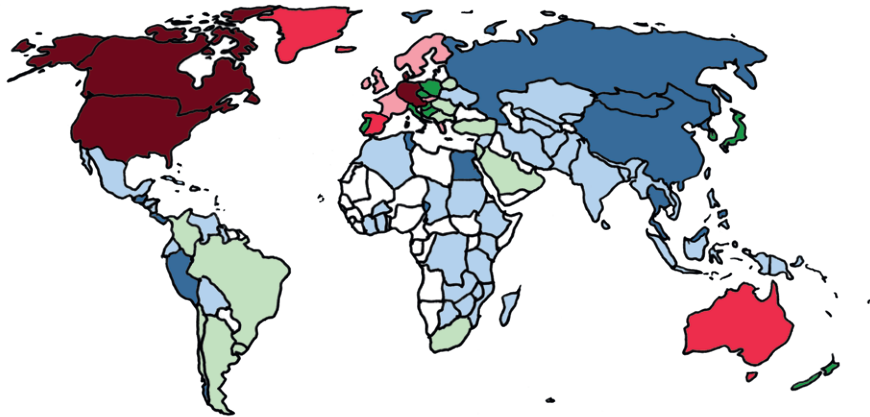


In Ethiopia, for example, there are ~85,000 HIV and cancer patients...

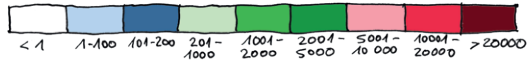
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...but strong pain medication is only available for 500 people.*)

People in more than 150 countries worldwide have no access to morphine or other strong pain medication **)



Legend: Consumption in S-DDD per million people per day

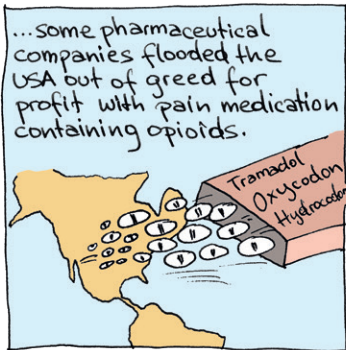


DD ... defined daily dose

*) Quelle: Human Rights Watch, Global State of Pain Treatment. Access to Palliative Care as a Human Right. 2011
www.hrw.org

***) Quelle: International Narcotics Control Board 2019. Daten für 2014-2016.

The Opioid Crisis - from 1996 until today



Hundreds of thousands in the USA became addicted...



...and began buying heroin and other drugs on the black market.

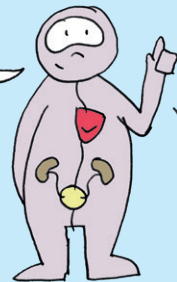


In 2015, the number of people who died in the USA due to drug overdose...



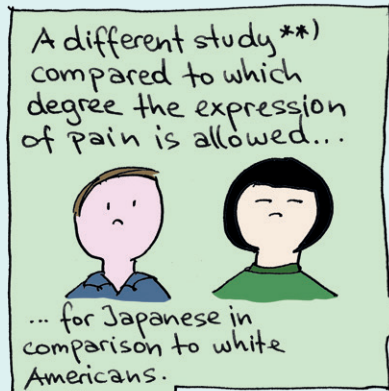
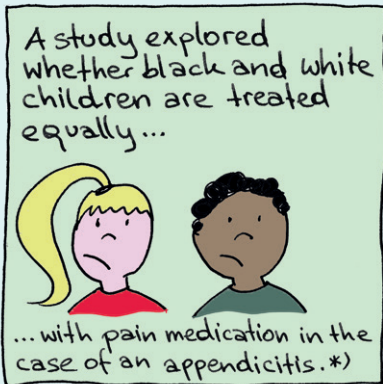
...reached the degree of an epidemic.

In the case of chronic pain, it is best to contact a palliative care institution and...



...have it checked regularly whether the painkillers are still appropriate.

Expressing pain - are we allowed to? Whom do doctors believe?





*) Source: Racial disparities in pain management of children with appendicitis in emergency departments. M.K. Goyal, N. Kuppermann, S.D. Cleary, S.J. Teach, J.M. Chamberlain. JAMA Pediatrics 2015

***) Source: Beliefs about appropriate pain behavior: cross-cultural and sex differences between Japanese and Euro-Americans. M. Hobar. Department of Biopsychology. New York State Psychiatric Institute. 2004

***) Source: Women's pain is routinely underestimated, and gender stereotypes are to blame - new research. A.C. deWilliams. World Economic Forum. 2021

Portraying the unspoken or unspeakable with comics



And now some humor!

Comics can but don't have to have a humoristic tone (this distinguishes them from cartoons).

*Comics are only for kids
(and a few nerds).*

Not necessarily. Comics are suited to express any kind of content for all age groups in images. In the medical field, there are comics for patients, friends and family, medical staff, as well as students.

Comics can only portray simple content.

Quite the contrary, comics offer a highly diverse way of expressing and displaying content. They can engage readers in a story, dare a glance behind the curtain, and prompt a change in perspective.



Comics are not suited for difficult topics.

Quite the contrary, the visual rhetoric can make it easier to grasp difficult topics. The observers can consume and let the content sink in at their own pace and depth. You can be drawn into a story and be inspired to reflect on it.

Comics, now also in the field of medicine.

Comics have been used for decades to transmit medical content. The imagery is also highly suited to reach out to people with reading and writing disabilities. They provide a low-threshold approach.

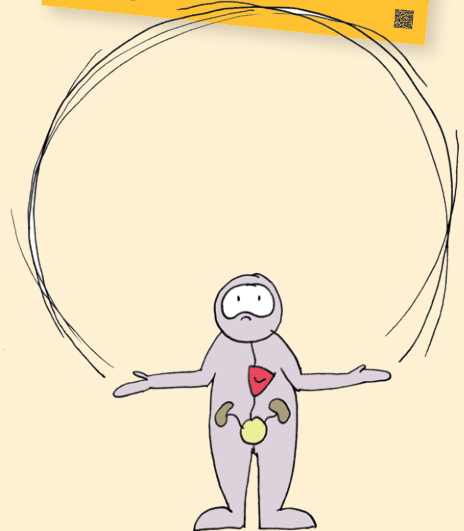
The Exhibition

Renate Mowlam's comic "Pain" was created for the exhibition **Art • Action • Attitude/Pain** (2022/2023) at the Medical University of Vienna.

Renate Mowlam's work focuses on giving a wide audience an understanding of scientific content in the form of comics. She, for example, draws medical facts for patients as well as results by researchers from animal behavioural studies for interested readers. Her goal is to explain complex content in a simple way through her comics.

Experiencing pain, enduring pain, having to witness and endure other people's pain; physical pain, mental pain, acute and chronic pain, Weltschmerz, uncontrollable pain, distance from pain: being able to express pain, expressing pain in a way that it is understood. Artists address all of these topics. Pain leads to deep existential controversies; unnecessary pain can trigger political activism. Pain is not an "easy" topic for an exhibition on Medical Comics or Graphic Medicine but you will notice that it is far from being gloomy.

The Editors



This book was created in the context of the exhibition **Art • Action • Attitude/Pain** that was on show from November 2022 to end of June 2023 at the auditorium centre of the Medical University of Vienna at the Allgemeines Krankenhaus Wien.

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Renate Mowlam, www.renatentwurf.at

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