

Trustee Letter

As we review the work of Mayday in 2014, we join many of our grantees in support of the draft *National Pain Strategy* recently released for public comment by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. This document is broad in scope and will go some way towards placing pain more in the forefront of clinical care. The fact that the United States is moving in the direction of acknowledging the burden of acute and chronic pain is a vital first step towards changing practice and towards moving pain higher on the national research agenda. For The Mayday Fund, after 21 years of making grants to ‘alleviate the incidence, degree and consequence of human physical pain’, the issuance and eventual adoption of the *National Pain Strategy* holds promise that more will be done to know how and why pain continues to be so undertreated. As always, the challenge will be to change how pain is cared for.

In 2014, we continued to pursue work that explores new ways of closing the gap between clinician knowledge of pain and its treatment. The Fund, working with other foundations, supported the work being done to promote Interprofessional Core Competencies in Pain Management. Training in the form of fellowships and lab visits continue in the arenas of geriatric and pediatric medicine. And, with a grant to *Open Pediatrics*, we entered the virtual world of providing pain-focused training and support materials to a clinician community that now spans more than 124 countries.

From a convening meeting that explored the role genetic studies may play in pain, to clinical research addressing the transitions from acute to chronic pain, to exploring the role of diet in painful conditions, and to probing the intriguing ways the brain may be read using imagery, The Fund continued its mission to provide pilot level funding to pain researchers. This work will decode the puzzle of what pain is, try to explain how it works, assess what impacts it has on quality of life, and for the person in pain, hopes to discover ways to function free of the handicaps pain imposes. In the Overview that follows, you will see the scope and breadth of The Fund’s grant making.

If we consider for a minute the role that pain plays in literature, it is often portrayed as a presence – one that at times invades, at others is quiescent. Some of the work our grantees address are questions of stoicism, empathy in clinical care, the role of communication about pain — including, are there words adequate to express what a person in pain is experiencing? As we consider the needs of those who are unable to communicate in conventional ways, for a variety of possible reasons, we are aware that addressing the needs of non-verbal populations remains a crucial part of the mission. It is here that supporting the science of pain will be critical, as will the development of tools to serve these populations.

Finally, as we had hoped, 2014 proved to be a year where Mayday saw many of the longer-term successes of previous grants become part of the evidence base for the direct care of pain. More is now known about the role of diet in chronic daily headache, there is a scale to assess pain in autistic children when they are in the Emergency Department, in Canada there now is a national guideline to address pain when vaccinations are given to children –and these are just a few of the grants made from 2008 - 2010 that continue to yield impressive results.

We look forward to 2015 and with all best wishes,

Trustees

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