

Join USASP Today!

# USASP

US Association for  
the Study of Pain

## Monthly Newsletter

July 13th, 2022  
Volume 9

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### Rita Allen Foundation Award in Pain Announcement



Rita Allen Foundation

Applications for the 2022 Rita Allen Foundation Award in Pain will open **October 15, 2022**. Completed applications must be submitted by **December 15, 2022**. Information about how to apply for this award can be found by clicking the button below. Information about the 2021 Awardees can be viewed [here](#). Members can also access the January Educational Event **The Career Corner: Writing a Winning Rita Allen Award Application** [here](#).

Click to view more information about the award

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### Upcoming Event!

**USASP TODAY**  
A Calling of a Pain Scientist



Speaker

**Dr. Erin Young**

Assistant Professor  
University of Kansas  
Medical Center

**Aug 2  
3pm CT**

Contact  
[admin@usasp.org](mailto:admin@usasp.org)

Register  
[www.usasp.org/calendar](http://www.usasp.org/calendar)

You are invited to join us for the USASP's second USASP Today Event with Dr. Erin Young (University of Kansas Medical Center) to be held on August 2nd at 3pmCT/4pm ET.

[Register here!](#)

## Jobs and Training

Stanford University School of Medicine

[Postdoctoral Fellow Position in Neuroimaging based Biomarkers of Chronic Pain](#)

[Postdoctoral Fellowships in Interdisciplinary Research Training in Pain and/or Substance Use Disorders \(NIH NIDA T32 supported\)](#)

San Diego VA Hospital

[Full-time Staff Psychologist at Veterans Affairs San Diego Healthcare System \(VASDHS\) Mental Health Care Line](#)

## Interested in joining a Special Interest Group?

[Click here to sign-up or petition for a new SIG](#)

## Did you miss USASP's Juneteenth Event?

USASP Juneteenth Seminar

June 20th at 11am ET

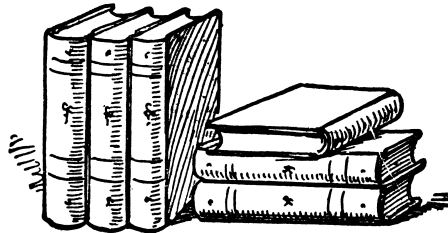
# CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Tamara Baker, PhD  
Professor  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

**Free for USASP Members**  
**10\$ fee for non-members**

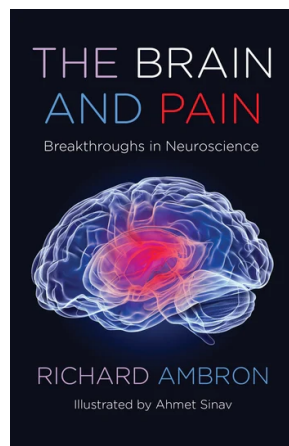


[Click here to view event recording](#)



## BOOK CORNER

EDITED BY JOHN LOESER &  
DAVID TAUBEN



### The Brain and Pain

Richard Ambron

*A comprehensive overview of the neural mechanisms underlying the experience of pain by an experienced researcher and teacher.*

New York, Columbia University Press, 2022. 251 pages  
ISBN 9780231204866 Hardback, \$94.75  
ISBN 9780231204873 Paperback, \$30.00  
ISBN 9780231555715 E-book, \$14.99

### **A review of The Brain and Pain**

This book is a biomedically fixated learner's dream. Columbia University emeritus professor of pathology, anatomy and cell biology Richard Ambron has done a wonderful job of working his way through the nervous system identifying the neural components of the pain process. He elucidates the many neural mechanisms from the periphery to the cerebral cortex that play a role in the identification of tissue damage and the creation of both physical and emotional responses to this. He explains pains without known peripheral origin by invoking mechanisms

that have been studied in various animal species. Although there are certainly similarities between the human nervous system and other animals, especially primates, it may be dangerous to assume that analogous regions play the same role in all animals.

This book relies heavily on fMRI derived information from experimental pain paradigms: BOLD information does not reveal whether the neuronal activity is facilitatory or inhibitory and this greatly complicates the ability to describe neural circuits and their involvement in any process. The purported role of different anatomical structures of the brain is described even for psychological treatments of pain. The author has great faith in the ability of the pharmaceutical industry to develop new compounds that will be both safe and effective in the treatment of pain; certainly not very successful an activity thus far. An example of his optimism is the section on optogenetics. This requires the injection of a vector in the brain and then exposure to light of specific frequencies to control neuronal functions. Clearly this is a trip to the distant future and not in our current therapeutic armamentarium. The author writes "It should therefore have many applications for the management of pain." I would not put money on this program. I am also uncomfortable with the author's frequent dichotomizing of pain into physical and psychological: all pain is the result of neural activity in the brain regardless of the proximate cause.

The strength of this book is its superb descriptions of what is known about how the nervous system processes information about tissue damage. The weakness is the author's unremitting faith in biomedical research findings leading to new and more successful strategies for the treatment of pain. As the author writes, psychological strategies can change brain function, and a more balanced approach would consider these as part of the future of pain management.

**Written by John D. Loeser, MD**

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## Upcoming Events

- July 15 (2-3pm ET): July #Pain 2022 Workshop ([register here to attend](#))
  - August 4 (2pm ET): Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-racism SIG Meeting
  - August 11 (11am ET): Substance Use and Addiction SIG Meeting
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**USASP**

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If your SIG or committee has updates or events you would like shared with USASP membership please email them using the contact below.

**Contact Info:**

US Association for the Study of Pain  
[admin@usasp.org](mailto:admin@usasp.org)

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