



UNDERSTANDING  
THE PATIENT'S  
PERSPECTIVE

# Assessing dental pain in patients with intellectual disabilities

*Can we see their pain?*

*Yes, we can !*

*Elinor Bouvy-Berends*

*ISDH, Kilkenny 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015*

# presentation

1. Pain in people with IDs  
*growing evidence*
2. "Know their Pain"  
*results Down study 2010*
3. Pain & Cognition in Adults  
with Down Syndrome
4. The 2015 Dutch Guideline  
Signalling Pain in People  
with Intellectual Disabilities  
(IDs)



# The Lancet 1987

## dr.Kanwaljeet J. "Sunny" Anand

- doctors in the eighties ...  
*newborns and fish have no pain*



### RANDOMISED TRIAL OF FENTANYL ANAESTHESIA IN PRETERM BABIES UNDERGOING SURGERY: EFFECTS ON THE STRESS RESPONSE

K. J. S. ANAND\*

*Department of Paediatrics, John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford*

W. G. SIPPPELL

*Abteilung für Allgemeine Pädiatrie, Universitäts-Kinderklinik,  
Kiel, FRG*

A. AYNSLEY-GREEN

*Department of Child Health, Royal Victoria Infirmary,  
Newcastle upon Tyne*



# Pain 1979

- “an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage “  
IASP 1979
- American Pain Society (APS)
- *Pain, the fifth vital sign ( 1995)*  
*(heart rate or pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate and body temperature)*

# *Self report : the golden standard*

“The inability to communicate does not negate the possibility that an individual is experiencing pain and is in need of appropriate pain-relieving treatment”

*Inability to reliably report pain?*



*....one of the paradoxes of life  
for people with severe, profound IDs..*

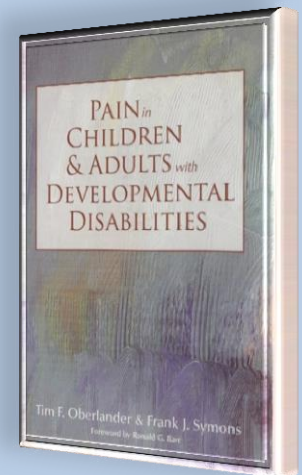
“their neurodevelopmental disorders place them at a significantly greater risk for pain-related medical conditions

their level of cognitive impairment precludes the conventional communication of their pain to others”

Bodfish ( 2006)

*In: Oberlander & Symons:*

*Pain in children and adults with developmental disabilities*



# Pain in people with IDs

- 25% healthy children :every week one of more painful events
- 60 % of children and 75% of adults with a sensory or intellectual disability has chronic pain ( Breau 2003)



# Pain in people with IDs

- *Co-morbidity*: dislocation of hips, muscular spasm, reflux or scoliosis >less pain medication in comparison with cognitively intact individuals (Malviya et al.2001).
- *Prevalence health problems*: epilepsy, ear and hearing problems, oral health problems, gastroesophageal reflux disease & obstipation (*Van Schojenstein Lantman-de Valk, e.a., 2008*)
- *Children with Down syndrome* : +/- 50% heart or intestinal surgery at a young age



# ... do we see their pain?

- Parents underestimate pain of their child >>  
*under-treatment of pain*  
(Chambers et al. 1998)
- Dentists underestimate pain of the child  
*“pain blindness by healthcare professionals”*  
(Versloot et al. 2004)
- Need for treatment in IDs underestimated,  
*oral pain & discomfort not recognized* by  
parents, carers, dentists  
(Hennequin et al , 2000)

# Much to be learned from clinical anecdotes

Young man with Autism

fracture of the mandibula, unnoticed by caregivers  
Dental malocclusion in molar region observed in a periodic oral examination

>> delay in  
pain management & treatment



# John

- ... “a delayed diagnosis of the presence and cause of pain >> setback in hospitalization and increased death rates” (Weiner et al, 1999)



# Pain sensitivity & pain response

- “people with IDs feel little or no pain”
- increasing interest among scientists and practitioners
- growing evidence to the contrary
- increased life expectancy



a high clinical relevance  
of identifying pain in IDs

# Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills

**Wilde** ([Dublin](#), [16 October 1854](#) – [Parijs](#), [30 November 1900](#))



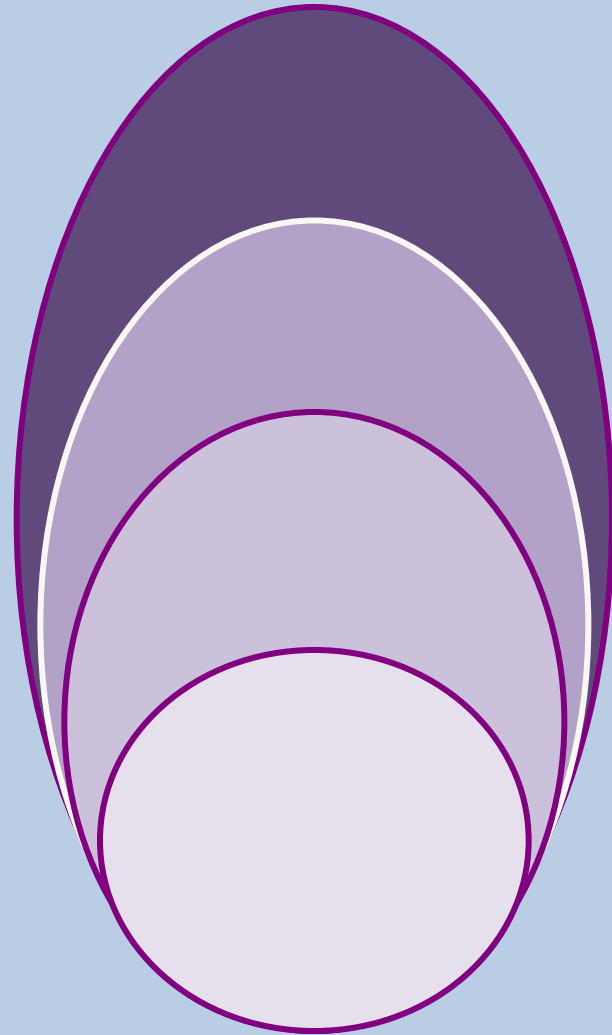
**“I don’t mind pain  
as long as  
it doesn’t hurt”**

( by courtesy of A.Valkenburg)

1882: Napoleon Sarony  
Metropolitan Museum of Arts

# Pain Model Loeser

John Loesser, neurosurgeon( 2000)  
The different layers of pain explained



## **Pain behavior**

>> *observation scales*

## **Suffering**

>> self report

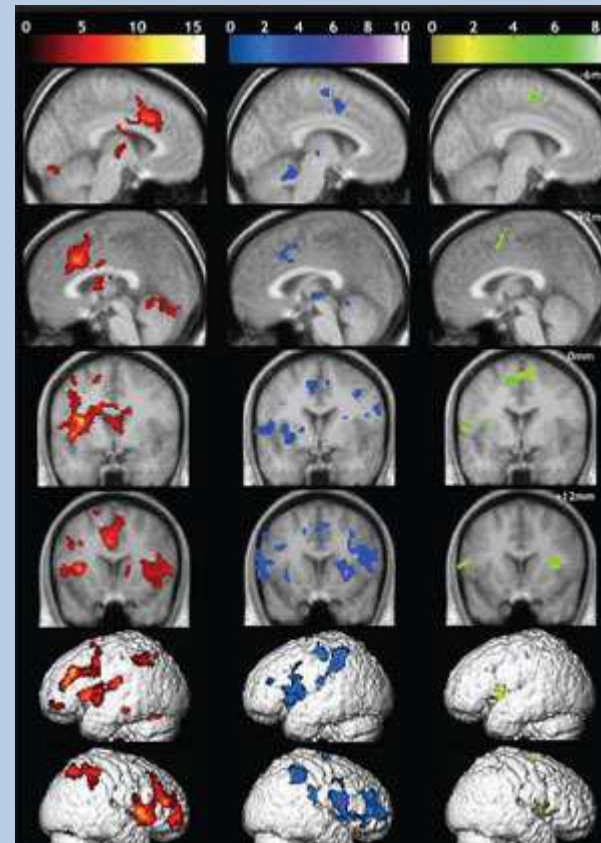
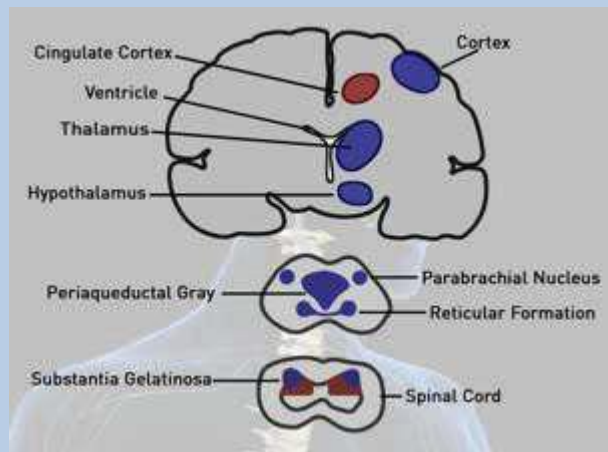
## **Pain perception**

>> sensory testing

## **Nociception**

>> fMRI

# Visualization of the path of pain by fMRI



# Observational tools for pain assessment in children with Ids

Association between observable behavior and pain experience

- *30 observational tools* for the “non-verbals” neonates, young children

Lynn Breau , 2000, Canada:  
*the Non-communicating Children’s Pain Checklist NCCPC*

- *only 5 observational tools* for intellectual disabled children

Terstegen , 2003, ErasmusMC Rotterdam: *Checklist Pain Behaviour CPG*



# Behavioral Pain Indicators in People With Intellectual Disabilities ( N.C.de Knegt)

The Journal of Pain, Vol 14, No 9 (September), 2013: pp 885-896

- Association between observable behavior and pain experience
- Unique individual pain response
- A possible clinical relevant set of indicators
- *Motor activity*  
*Facial activity*  
*Social emotional indicators*  
*Nonverbal vocal expressions*

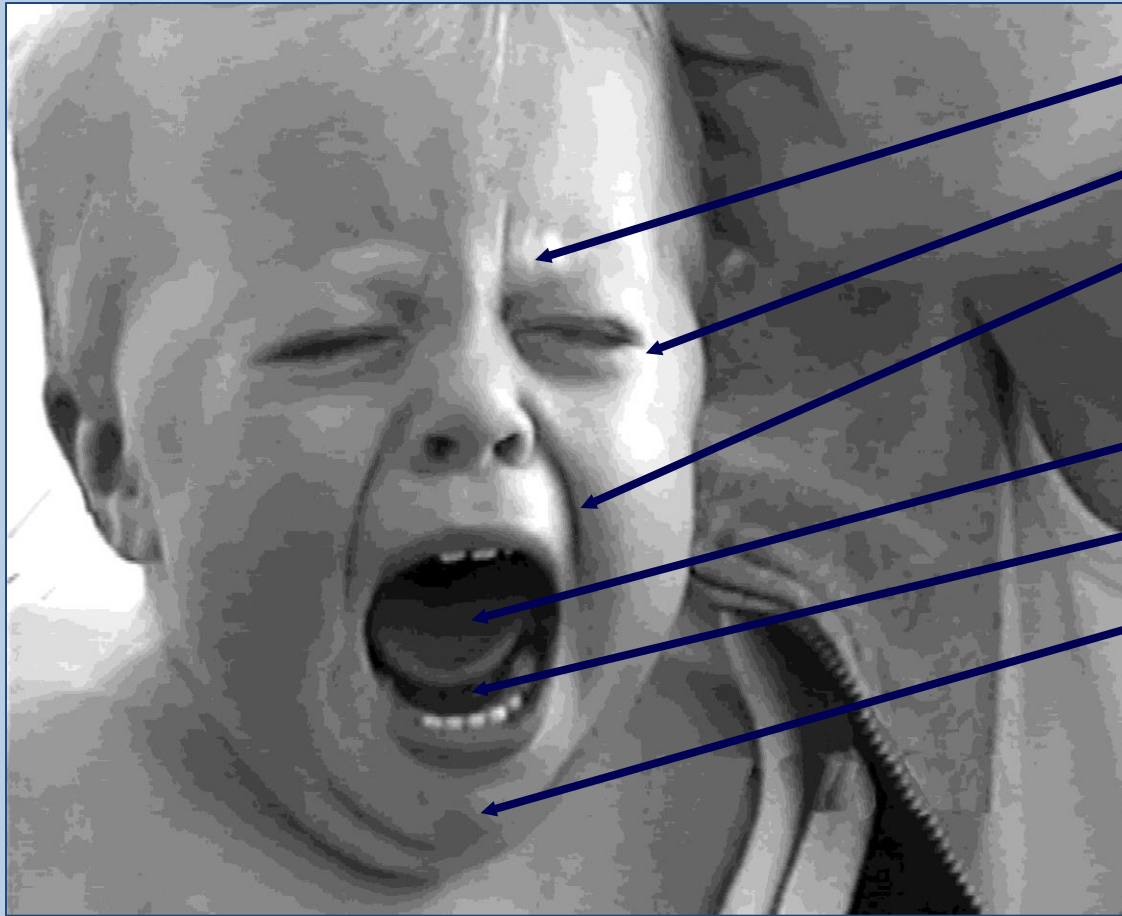
# Facial expression : the most important communication channel.



# Facial expressions of fear, anger, pain and sadness



# “The facial display of pain”



- Brow Bulge
- Eye squeeze
- Naso-labial furrow
- Open mouth
- Horizontal mouth stretch
- Vertical mouth stretch
- Cup tong
- Tongue protrusion
- Chin quiver
- Lip purse

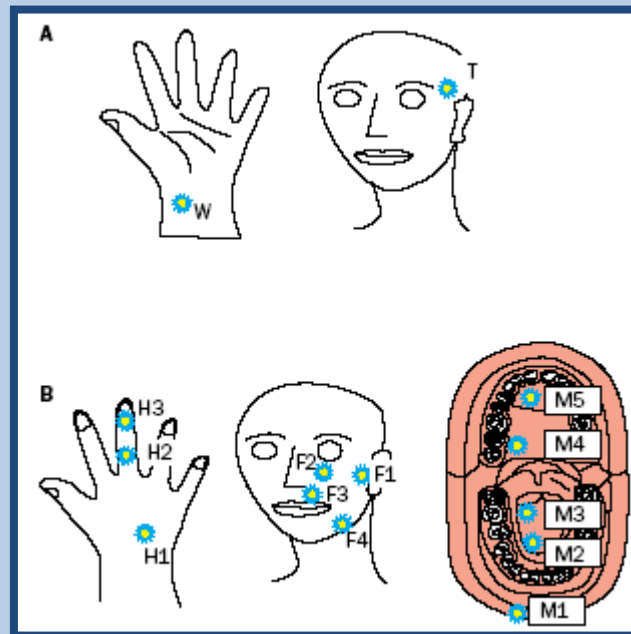
Oberlander et al. 1999, LaChapelle et al. 1999, Nader et al. 2004

# next step in pain research in IDs

- from observation of behaviour possibly due to pain
- *to*
- measurement of pain ( sensitivity )by sensory testing



Hennequin, M., Morin, C. & Feine, J.S. (2000). Pain expression and stimulus localisation in individuals with Down's syndrome. *Lancet*, 356, 1882-1887



### Down syndroom

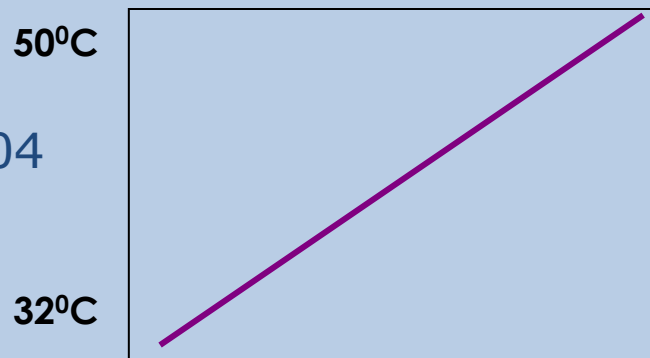
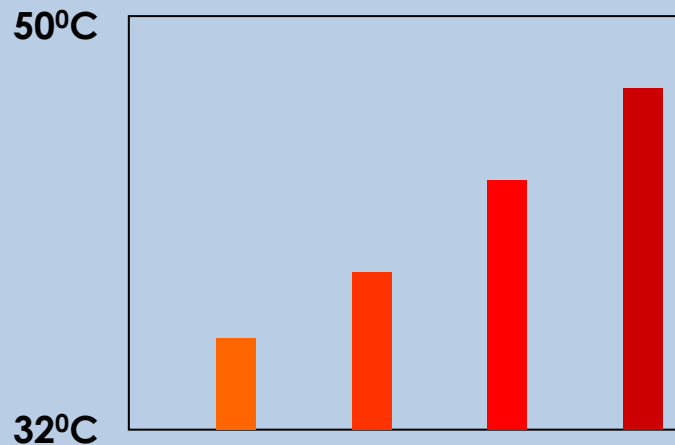
26 subjects, 75 controls

Greater latency times

Higher pain threshold  
?

More difficulties in  
localizing cold stimuli

# Pain Sensitivity Down Syndrome



Defrin et al. Pain 2004

Down syndrome  
25 ID adults ( 11 DS )  
14 controls

Method of Levels MLE:  
*reaction time independant*

Method of Limits MLI :  
*reaction time dependant*

Greater latency time

Heat Pain threshold in IDs  
and DS lower

More sensitive to heat?

**No Consensus about direction of pain sensitivity !**

## The Down study 2010

*Children with Down syndrome do they have **another pain sensitivity?***

*How do children with Down syndrome show that they are in pain? **Pain expression.***

*Is there **a genotype-phenotype relationship** for the pain sensitivity?*



# ***"Know their pain"*** Down study 2010



*a high tech instrument station on the doorstep!*

150 DS children  
8 -13 yrs of age  
'at home with  
parents/caregivers'

*Monique van Dijk, Bram Valkenburg, Dick Tibboel*

*Erasmus MC Instrument Van : Citroën HY-1978 ,*

"Common sensation is generally much less acute than in ordinary persons. Pain is born with wonderful callousness. It is not uncommon for children of this class to allow a thecal abscess to be opened with a scalpel without a grimace or *without uttering a word.*"

1887 James Langdon Down



*Phd Thesis 2012 ( cum laude)*  
*A.J. ( Bram) Valkenburg, Erasmus University Rotterdam*

# In the Instrument Van



- *visual-motor reaction time*
- *pain sensitivity QST*
- *facial expression*
- *DNA research pain*



## SENSORY TESTING 1

4



IK HEB EEN BIJZONDERE STAART!  
IK KAN MIJN STAART WARM MAKEN  
ALS IK DAT WIL, OF JUIST KOUD!

IK BEN BENIEUWD OF  
JE DAT KUNT VOELEN



LEG JE HAND MAAR IN MIJN NEK,  
DAT IS LEKKER ZACHT! IK HELP JE WEL MET  
DE METINGEN, ER KAN NIETS MET JE  
HAND GEBEUREN HOOR!



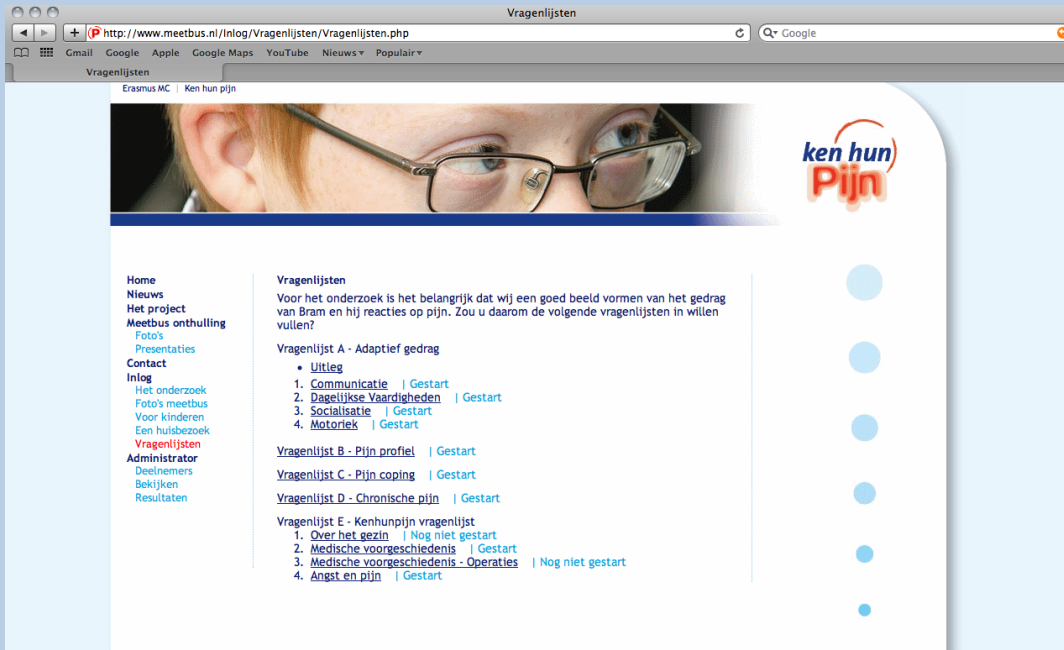
design by panton / 2010

I have a special tail!  
If I wish I can make  
my tail hot or cold

I wonder if you feel  
it

Put your hand on my  
neck, which is nice  
and soft. I'll help you  
with the  
measurements  
nothing can happen  
to your hand

# questionnaires



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.meetbus.nl/Inlog/Vragenlijsten/Vragenlijsten.php>. The page title is 'Vragenlijsten'. The main content area features a header image of a person's face with glasses and the 'ken hun Pijn' logo. Below the header, there is a navigation menu on the left and a list of questionnaires on the right. The questionnaires listed are:

- Vragenlijst A - Adaptief gedrag**
  - [Littleg](#)
  - 1. [Communicatie](#) | Gestart
  - 2. [Dagelijkse Vaardigheden](#) | Gestart
  - 3. [Socialisatie](#) | Gestart
  - 4. [Motoriek](#) | Gestart
- [Vragenlijst B - Pijn profiel](#) | Gestart
- [Vragenlijst C - Pijn coping](#) | Gestart
- [Vragenlijst D - Chronische pijn](#) | Gestart
- Vragenlijst E - Kenhupijn vragenlijst**
  - 1. [Over het gezin](#) | Nog niet gestart
  - 2. [Medische voorgeschiedenis](#) | Gestart
  - 3. [Medische voorgeschiedenis - Operaties](#) | Nog niet gestart
  - 4. [Angst en pijn](#) | Gestart

Medical history,  
family

Vineland Adaptive  
Behavior Scale

Pain Coping  
Questionnaire

Chronic Pain  
Questionnaire

# Quantitative Sensory Testing : A bridge too far ?



42 DS ( mean age 12 yrs),  
24 siblings ( mean age 14 yrs)

Significantly longer reaction time to pain

**inadequate self  
report for pain**

85% DS verbalize pain,  
20% DS quantify pain,  
only 46% localize pain

**QST possible ?**

88% DS >> cold/warmth/sharp /blunt  
33% DS >> detection threshold for warmth

**DS children more sensitive for heat pain  
and (?) more sensitive to cold pain**



Parents: minority of children able to self report pain, & parents rate their children as less sensitive to pain

***Verbal and non-verbal pain and pain expressions in DS probably different than expected***

DS children use primarily distraction coping styles ;  
DS children do not make attempts to deal with the pain

# conclusion



- DS children remain dependant of pain and stress assessment by proxy, throughout their lives, since self-report is inadequate
- Parents rate their children with Down syndrome as less sensitive to pain, but this is not confirmed by quantitative sensory testing
- Children with DS do not try to deal with pain & distress: they look for distraction





*FOTOMARCGIJSBERS, THEATER MAATWERK*

# Pain and Cognition in Adults with Down Syndrome

The PhD project of Nanda C. de Knecht,

Clinical Neuropathology,

VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands

# Pain in adults with intellectual disabilities

*Nanda de Knecht, Erik Scherder* PAIN 152 (2011) 971–974



dementia on the rise!  
increase pain studies in dementia.



IDs : increased life expectancy  
DS >> musculoskeletal disorders  
e.g. arthrosis ( use of analgesics)

*dementia in DS : as early as from their fortieth*

# Pain in adults with intellectual disabilities

*Nanda de Knegt, Erik Scherder*  
974

PAIN 152 (2011) 971–

- *Dementia*  
*altered pain experience*  
*different pain perception*
- *Pain perception in adult DS*  
*an altered pain experience based on*  
*neuropathology?*
- *Discrimination between pain and mental state of*  
*anxiety :*  
*paracetamol or haloperidol ?*



# Pain and cognitive functioning

*Pain: negative for cognitive functioning:*

Poorer memory,  
distracted, loss of skills ,  
bad mood, *grumpy*  
change in behavior

*Old age, dementia or stress?*



# Pain related neuropathology in IDs

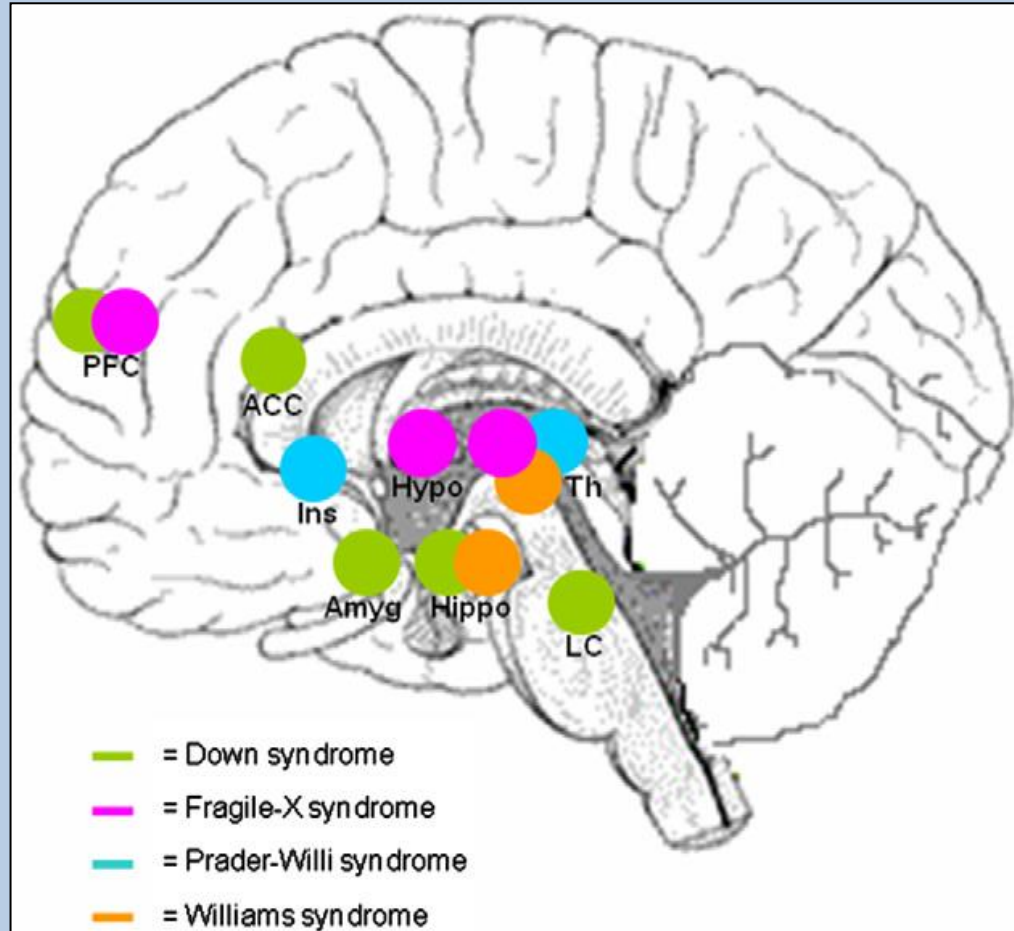


Fig. 1. Pain-related gray matter neuropathology in the most prevalent subtypes of Intellectual Disability (ID)

# Pain related neuropathology in IDs

- neuropathological changes can affect the pain system in the brains.
- Fragile X syndrome & Prader Willi syndrome: degeneration of white matter >> a lower pain tolerance >> increase in suffering from pain ?
- Down Syndrome & Williams syndrome : neuropathology >> suggests both decrease as increase in pain experience ?

# A self report tool for pain for adult DS ?

autonomous functioning !

DS stronger visual-spatial than verbal abilities

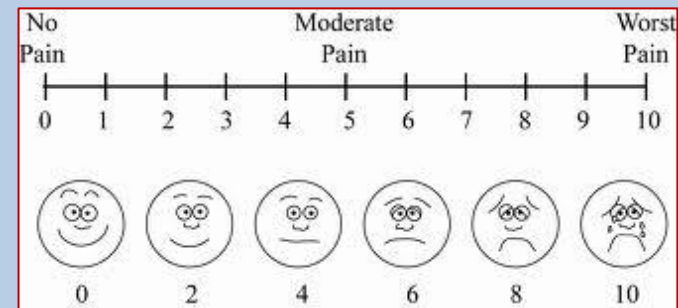
***assessment of comprehension***

numeric rating scale NRS & Facial Affect Scale FAS

***>> 70% comprehended at least one of the two scales***



Paulus de Groot



N.C.de Knegt, H.M.Evenhuis et al. Does format matter for comprehension of a facial affective scale and a numeric scale for pain adults with Down syndrome? Research in Developmental Disabilities 34 ( 2013) 3442-3448

# The DS patient in the Dental Office

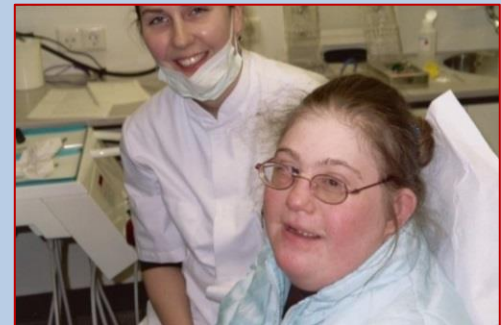
Use “open questions”  
and simple language

*Repeat final option  
in questions  
with multiple answers*



Unreliably self report  
for pain &  
localisation of pain

*prevent pain experiences*





# The DS patient in the Dental Office

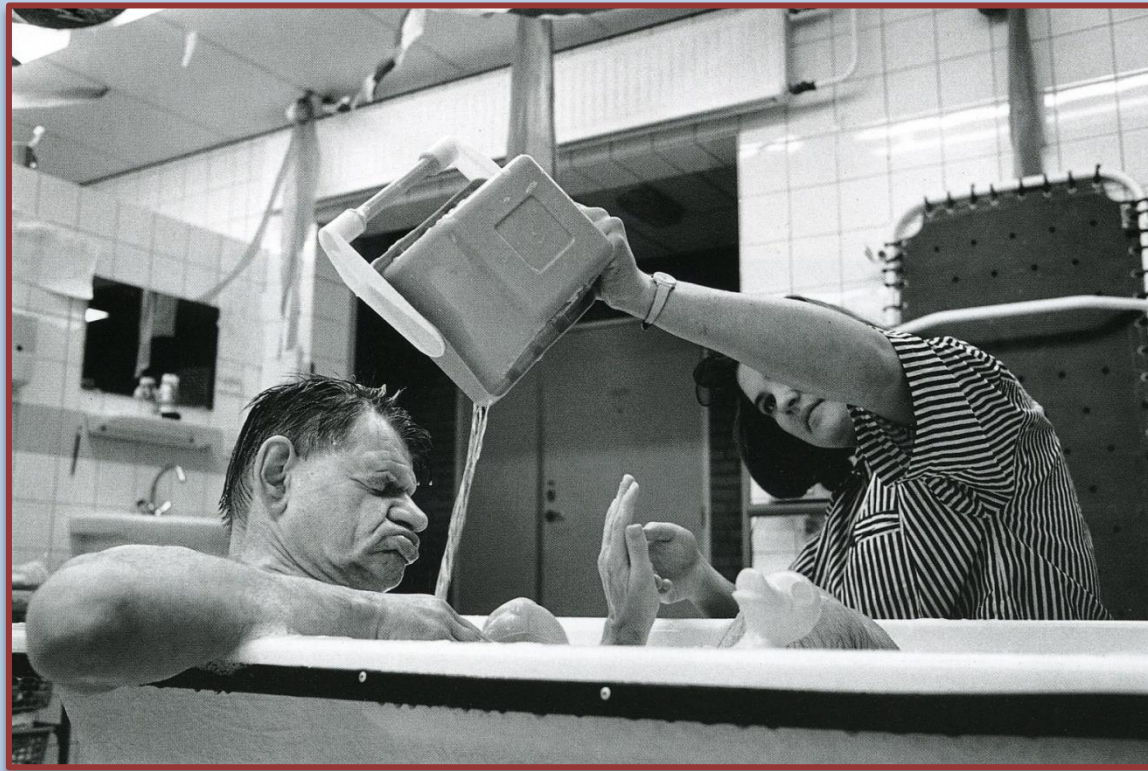
Longer reaction time  
& slower verbal response  
use local analgesia &  
the rule of 6 ( seconds)



Different coping styles:  
better understanding of  
fear and anxiety  
in dental setting



# Pain in Adults with Intellectual Disabilities and Impaired Verbal Expression



# The 2015 Dutch Guideline Signaling Pain in People with Intellectual Disabilities (IDs)

- The professional association of healthcare professionals V&VN



- 18-50 yrs of age with IDs and communication difficulties
- for nurses and caregivers *“the people at the bedside”*



Basic attitude of genuine interest in the other

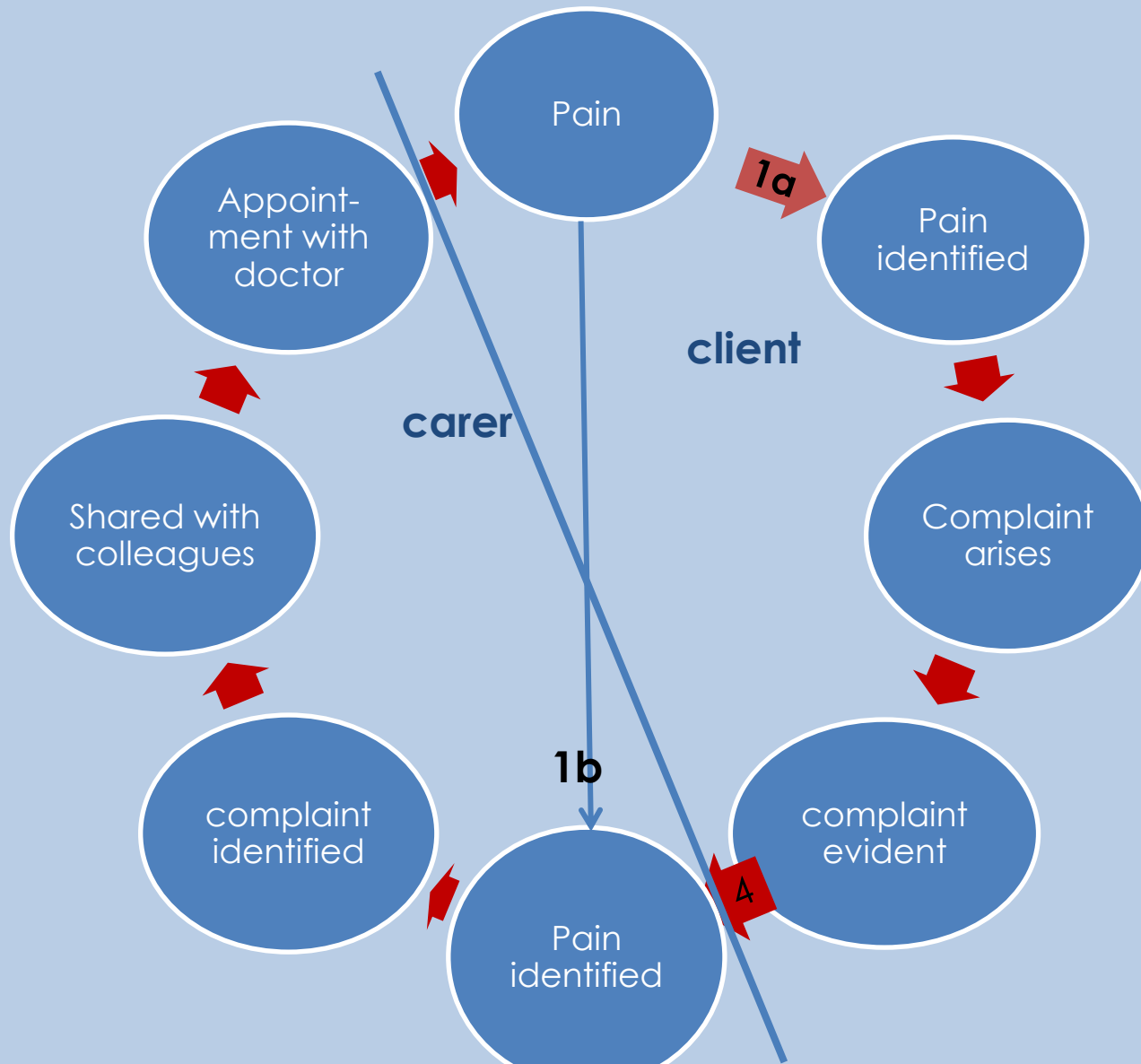


Professional awareness



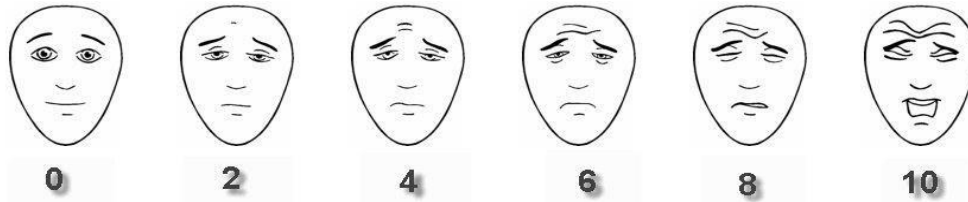
Exchange of health information

# Cycle of exchange of pain information from client to caregiver



# Application of pain observational tools

Faces Pain Scale - Revised



Capable of self-report >

Facies Pain Scale FPS-revised

Not capable of self-report >

Rotterdam Elderly Pain Observation Scale  
REPOS



Le Repos, Picasso, 1932



Rotterdam Elderly Pain Observation Scale

REPOS: An observation scale for pain assessment in cognitively impaired adults and elderly  
version 1.0

Van Herk et al. J Pain Manag 2008

ErasmusMC

# Orofacial Pain in Dementia Patients: ***A Diagnostic Challenge***

Frank Lobbezoo, Roxane Weijenberg, Erik Scherder  
*J Orofacial Pain 2010; 25: 6-14*

*no specific orofacial pain indicators in ADD, DS-DAT, Doloplus 2, PACSLAC en PAINAID*

*Develop a specific observational tool for orofacial/dental pain*  
for dental patients with IDs ,  
acquired brain injury, dementia

*To prevent unnecessary  
suffering & treatments*



# Guideline signaling pain in people with intellectual disabilities

Special attention for oral health  
possible signals of pain in orofacial area

- ❖ *the patient holds/ rub the orofacial area*
- ❖ *limits mandibular movements*
- ❖ *modified his/her oral (eg.eating) behavior*
- ❖ *and/or is uncooperative to oral care*



# *Epilogue*

Oral diseases

a major impact on physical and mental wellbeing

Timely recognition of orofacial/dental pain in people with intellectual disabilities : a responsibility for oral health professionals & an incentive for further research



**Can we see their pain:  
*yes, we can!***