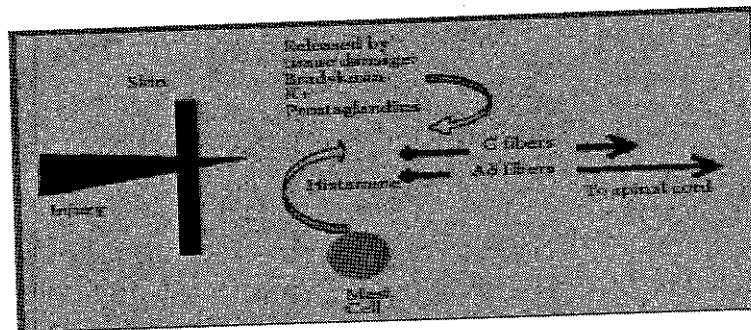


"The Protective Function of Pain"

Pain is essential for survival; it reminds your body to get away from danger. What is pain? Pain is a perception of a feeling or sensation which we call pain. Nocioceptors are nerve endings that convert stimuli into nerve impulses, then the brain interprets these impulses to produce the sensation of pain. Impulses can be slow (C fibers) or fast (A fibers) depending on the stimuli the brain is responding to. For example A fibers will allow quick and sharp pain while C fibers allow dull longlasting achy pain. After the insult to a tissue, different chemical substances are released by the body. These substances influence the degree of nerve activity and hence the intensity of pain sensation.

Nocioceptors (to hurt) is the sensory process triggered during a painful stimulus. Nocioception can lead to pain which can come and go, however, a person can have pain without nocioceptive activity. The IASP or international Association for the Study of Pain, define this as "the unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage." Because there is an emotional component to pain, each of us will experience it differently.



After an injury to the skin, chemicals are released: bradykinin, K⁺, and prostoglandins. The Mast Cell releases hystamine causing inflammation, and the A and C fibers send impulses back and forth from the spinal cord. Inflammation is the body's natural response to remind the brain that there has been an injury and the area must be protected to allow healing.

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Reference: www.IASP.com