
Chapter 5

Pain pathways

Introduction

This session was co-chaired by Henrik Kehlet and Emeran Mayer and its aim was to assess the respective roles of peripheral and central sensitisation in the perception of visceral pain.

Although visceral pain is the most common form of pain produced by disease, it has different characteristics from

somatic pain. Most experimental studies on pain relate to somatic pain and so cannot be extrapolated to visceral pain. Gerald Gebhart considers the unique pattern of innervation of the gastrointestinal tract and peripheral pathways while Fernando Cervero reviews our knowledge of some central nervous system mechanisms responsible for the perception of visceral pain.