



Dr. Andrea Furlan, MD PhD

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Dr. Andrea Furlan first connected with the Institute for Work & Health long distance, from her hometown of São Paulo, Brazil.

Furlan was a resident in physical medicine and rehabilitation (physiatry) when she met the founding chair of IWH's Scientific Advisory Committee, Dr. Alf Nachemson. He, in turn, introduced her to Senior Scientist Dr. Claire Bombardier, who would later become her PhD supervisor.

When she arrived in Canada, doors opened, thanks to two great mentors who saw potential in her – Dr. Claire Bombardier and Dr. Angela Mailis-Gagnon [director of the Comprehensive Pain Program at Toronto's University Health Network]. They offered guidance and mentorship.

During the early years of her appointment at IWH, Furlan became interested in systematic reviews and meta-analysis – her goal was to conduct systematic reviews of interventions to treat and manage chronic pain. This goal developed out of an awareness of a gap in clinical care that she identified while attending many patients with chronic pain. Furlan began volunteering with the Cochrane Back Review Group, and was hired as the Back Group Coordinator in 1998. At that time, Furlan began her master's degree, followed by a doctorate in clinical epidemiology from the University of Toronto, which she completed in 2006. After obtaining her PhD, she completed a clinical fellowship at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute (TRI) to practice medicine in Canada.

From 2003 to 2006, Furlan was a member of the CBRG Advisory Board (now called the Associate Editorial Board) and since 2006, has been a member of the CBRG Editorial Board. As a CBRG board member, she was responsible for the 2009 Update of the CBRG Method Guidelines. This publication has been cited more than 159 times. The 2003 Method Guideline (Furlan participated as a co-author) has more than 450 citations.

Building upon her success and reputation with the Cochrane Back Review Group, Furlan is already preparing for the next update of the CBRG Method Guidelines (expected in 2014), and is developing new methodology to conduct systematic reviews and meta-analyses of adverse effects of opioids. In fact, Furlan is the first author to register a title with the CBRG to conduct a review of harms.

In 2008, she led the research team that developed the *Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain* by the NOUGG (National Opioid Use Guideline Group). The guideline is of interest to workers' compensation boards due to the use of opioids by injured workers to manage pain.

Understanding the challenges in implementing the guideline's recommendations among busy primary care physicians, Furlan developed tools and educational materials to facilitate this process. In January 2013, she obtained a trademark of the Opioid Manager™ in Canada. The Opioid Manager™ is a point-of-care tool for clinicians prescribing opioids for patients with chronic non-cancer pain. It can be used as a chart insert, and serves various purposes: education, communication, and documentation. The paper version of the Opioid Manager™ has been downloaded more than 4,000 times. It has been translated into four languages: French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Farsi. The youtube video of the tool has been seen by more than 2,000 people. The Opioid Manager™ has been adapted to various Electronic Medical Records in Canada, and in September 2012 the Opioid Manager™ App for iPhone and iPad was released. To date, it has sold more than 400 copies worldwide.