Be aware that the placebo effect in pain is a product of many factors.

I. Know definitions of placebo, observed from various points of view with special reference to placebo analgesia (Wall 1992, 2003).

II. Be aware of placebo as a phenomenon in a wide variety of clinical and scientific settings (Shapiro and Shapiro 1997).

III. Be aware of historical aspects of placebo, explaining prescientific concepts and ideas that linger on within the medical profession, in the public at large, and in folk medicine (Beecher 1955; Brody 2000).

IV. Placebo effect: Be able to formulate definition and discussion items (Price 2000).

V. Be aware of the variety of described placebo mechanisms; know the basic scientific publications on various concepts:
   A. Expectation, desire (Kirsch 1985; Voudouris et al. 1990)
   B. Learning, conditioned reflex (Montgomery and Kirsch 1997)
   C. Cognitive modulation (Villemure and Bushnell 2002)
   D. Neurotransmitter reactions (Amanzio and Benedetti 1999; ter Riet et al. 1998)
   E. Context mechanisms (Di Blasi et al. 2001)
   F. Most appropriate action of the organism to find relief from pain (Wall 2000)

VI. Be aware of the various ways of interpreting aspects of the placebo response as a phenomenon (Kleijnen et al. 1994; Price 2001).

VII. Be aware of placebo as a methodological instrument in randomized controlled trials in pain research (Kleijnen et al. 1994).

VIII. Be aware of the role of expectancies in clinical trial design, as the power of the patient’s expectations underscores the importance of perceived assignment rather than actual assignment in clinical trial design (Finniss and Benedetti 2005).

IX. Be aware of the observation of placebo as a controversial “noise” factor, or response bias in the analysis of scientific data (Hróbjartsson and Gøtzsche 2001; Vase et al. 2002).

X. Be aware of the ethical aspects in relation to the application of placebo both in scientific and clinical practice (World Medical Association 2000; Lewis et al. 2002).

XI. Be aware of the open-hidden paradigm as a way of demonstrating and investigating the nonspecific factors (similar or identical to placebo factors) and as an ethical alternative to the administration of a placebo (Finniss and Benedetti 2005).

XII. Be aware of the recognition of placebo as a treatment modality, either intended or by coincidence (Brody and Brody 2000).

XIII. Be aware of the relationship of placebo and psychological mechanisms in pain and its treatment; the “doctor” as placebo (Brody 2000; Price and Bushnell 2004).

XIV. Be aware of the terminology and the area of relevance of the nocebo effect (Wall 2000).
REFERENCES


