11.8: XI Glossary

**Acute pain:** Pain that is limited in duration and is associated with a specific cause.

**Addiction:** A chronic disease of the brain’s reward, motivation, memory, and related circuitry reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors. Addiction is characterized by several symptoms, such as the inability to consistently abstain from a substance, impaired behavioral control, cravings, diminished recognition of significant problems with one’s behaviors and interpersonal relationships, and a dysfunctional emotional response.

**Adjuvant:** Medication that is not classified as an analgesic but has been found in clinical practice to have either an independent analgesic effect or additive analgesic properties when administered with opioids.

**Analgesics:** Medications used to relieve pain.

**Chronic pain:** Pain that is ongoing and persistent for longer than six months.

**Misuse:** Taking prescription pain medications in a manner or dose other than prescribed; taking someone else’s prescription, even if for a medical complaint such as pain; or taking a medication to feel euphoria (i.e., to get high).

**Neuropathic pain:** Pain caused by a lesion or disease of the somatosensory nervous system that is typically described by patients as “burning” or “like pins and needles.”

**Nociceptor:** A sensory receptor for painful stimuli.

**Pain:** An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with, or resembling that associated with, actual or potential tissue damage.
**Patient-Controlled Analgesia (PCA):** A method of pain management that allows hospitalized patients with severe pain to safely self-administer opioid medications using a programmed pump according to their level of discomfort.

**Physical dependence:** Withdrawal symptoms that occur when chronic pain medication is suddenly reduced or stopped because of physiological adaptations that occur from chronic exposure to the medication.

**Referred pain:** Pain perceived at a location other than the site of the painful stimulus. For example, pain from retained gas in the colon can cause pain to be perceived in the shoulder.

**Substance abuse disorder:** Significant impairment or distress from a pattern of substance use (i.e., alcohol, drugs or misuse of prescription medications).

**Tolerance:** A reduced response to pain medication when the same dose of a drug has been given repeatedly, requiring a higher dose of the drug to achieve the same level of response.