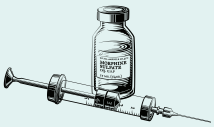
PAIN THROUGH THE AGES

1644
René Descartes presents his famous, **enduring dualistic view of pain (the Cartesian model)**, first placing pain in the physical realm.

1804
Friedrich Sertürner **isolates morphine from the opium plant**, naming the substance for Morpheus—the Greek god of dreams.



1816
Capsaicin, a compound producing initial heat and pain followed by analgesia, is first extracted from chili peppers.

1850
First observation of Brown-Séquard syndrome—a spinal cord injury causing loss of pain sensation on the opposite side of the body—reveals that **pain signals cross the spinal cord en route to the brain**.

1864
Civil War army physician Silas Weir Mitchell **observes lasting nerve pain from gunshot wounds** and coins the term "causalgia," the condition now known as complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS).

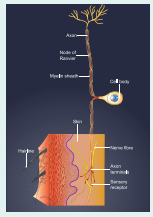
1906
Charles Sherrington describes "nociception," the activation of receptors he calls nociceptors—still theoretical at the time—by "noxious" stimuli.

1912
William Spiller and Edward Martin perform the first surgical cordotomy, severing nerve pathways that transmit pain and temperature signals to the brain.

1950s
John Bonica establishes the **world's first multidisciplinary pain clinic**.

1965
Ronald Melzack and Patrick Wall publish the revolutionary **Gate Control Theory of Pain**.

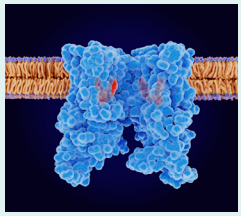
1967
Edward Perl confirms the **existence of Sherrington's nociceptors**.



1973
Candace Pert and Solomon Snyder **discover the mu opioid receptor**.

1977
The chili-pepper compound capsaicin is found (aptly, by Hungarian researchers) **to selectively kill nociceptors**.

1997
David Julius **identifies and clones TRPV1**, also known as the capsaicin receptor.



2000
Human Genome Project draft released; **Nav family of sodium channels sequenced**, providing targets for pain management.

2006
A child street performer in Pakistan who shocked tourists by sticking knives into his arms leads to a study of a rare genetic mutation that prevents pain sensation. Loss of function in the Nav1.7 protein is found to play a role, **revealing the sodium channel as a promising target for drug development**.

2018
FDA first approves a class of **migraine medications that block the effects of calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP)**, a signaling molecule released by nociceptors.

2025
FDA approves suzetrigine, **which targets voltage-gated sodium channels**, for treatment of moderate-to-severe acute pain.