Six articles are presented which illustrate the activities at the summer workshop "Pain and awareness" held 27-28 May 2005 in Marienfeld by the German Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Pain Therapy (DIVS). One article on pain constructs in the mind explains the advantages of functional imaging methods: these enable characterization of partial aspects of pain processing in the brain and the mechanisms that lead to chronic states of pain syndromes. A further overview explains the influence of different drugs on pain perception and various conscious states. How back pain patients experience their illness was analyzed in a study using an explanatory model interview: somatic aspects were dominant, but in three-fourths of the patients psychological illness attributions also played a role. A summary from the perspective of religious history and theology explores how pain is interpreted and accepted in various religious communities. Another article addresses hypnosis as a complementary technique to anesthesia procedures in surgical medicine, for treating chronic pain and experimental acute pain. The last contribution deals with how people in different cultures experience pain: ethnocentric bias can lead to difficulties in communication and
misjudgments when treating foreign-born patients. All in all the workshop highlighted important formative factors in pain processing in a condensed form and offered stimulating perspectives for this area of pain research and future treatment options.