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In the News

● FDA considers need for a statement of medical necessity on opioid prescriptions if prescribed above an “appropriate” amount.
● Shortages of some pre-filled opioid syringes on the horizon raise some concerns about safety, storage and wastage.
● Official definitions of pain types now include a “nociplastic pain” mechanism that evades detection of actual or threatened tissue damage.
● Despite this report confusing physical dependence from addiction, could hospitals be liable for not providing a taper plan?
● Kelleynne Conway is named the Opioid Czar to coordinate the Trump Administration efforts to address opioid overdoses.
● Cortical remapping was observed in a child after tonsillectomy/adenoidectomy despite a 2013 FDA warning of its unpredictable effect.
● Bipartisan senators reintroduced the Marijuana Effective Studies Act to stimulate research needed to determine its safety & efficacy.
● Aspirin or acetaminophen taken during pregnancy increases odds of developing cerebral palsy. Ibuprofen is not linked to this finding.
● Patients admitted for opioid-related exposure died at an alarming rate over a 20 year span, supporting need for treatment referral/resources.
● Pope Francis statement supports palliative care, that treats pain & loneliness in dying persons without resorting to overzealous treatment.
● Health & Human Services reveals its strategy to advance the practice of pain management using fewer opioids & reduce inappropriate use.
● Mayday Pain & Society Fellowship program resumes to help experts provide leadership & convey evidence-based pain care. Apply now!
● Painful procedures have a distinct brain activity pattern, which is greater in stressed babies despite no behavioral signs suggestive of pain.
● Proof of concept established for a potential disease modifying drug that reduces pain & improves function for knee OA.

Journal Watch [MGHers can obtain articles through the Treadwell home page]

● Ilhan E, Chee E, Hush J. The prevalence of neuropathic pain is high after treatment for breast cancer: a systematic review. Pain. 2017 Nov;158(11):2082-91. This type of pain is more prevalent in breast cancer than for other types of cancer, warranting further attention.
Journal Watch  [MGHers can obtain articles through the Treadwell home page] (continued)


- Silvestre J, Reddy A, de la Cruz M., et al. Frequency of unsafe storage, use, and disposal practices of opioids among cancer patients presenting to the emergency department. *Palliative Supportive Care.* 2017. Dec;15(6):638-43. Three-quarters of cancer patients fail to safely store opioids or dispose of unused opioids properly. Only 15% lock their opioids; but about 75% would use a lockbox if provided.


- Henry SG, Bell RA, Fenton JJ, et al. Goals of chronic pain management: Do patients and primary care physicians agree and does it matter? *Clin J Pain.* 2017 Nov;33(11):955-961. Primary care physicians recognize the value in functional goals and avoiding chronic opioids, but 48% of chronic pain patients’ top priority was to reduce pain intensity; compared to it being the top priority for about 5% of physicians.


- Abrecht W, Caring for patients who use opioids: Responsible prescribing & practical strategies. Charlestown MA

- Sun, April 29th Integrative Approaches to Pain Management, including nutrition, mind-body & complementary methods. Boston MA More info

- Find an online opioid risk mitigation course from among several Collaborative on REMS Education (CO*RE) approved courses.


- 17th World Congress on Pain® is less than a year away in Boston. September 12 – 16, 2018 Special registration rates through 12/31/17

MGH Pain Calendar

- Tools and Techniques for Effective Pain Management – Tuesday, January 23, 2018 Founders House 325 @ 8AM – 1PM Sign-up here.

- Palliative Care Grand Rounds are Wednesday mornings from 8AM – 9AM, Ether Dome. email: Margaret Spinale for more information.

**MGH Pain Resources**

- The Patient Education Television: Dial 4-5212 from patient’s phone then order; see handbook http://handbook.partners.org/pages/168 for listing: #120 Acute Pain #279 for Chronic Pain; #280 for Cancer Pain; #281 for Communicating Pain; #282 for Pain Medications.


- The MGH Center for Translational Pain Research: http://www.massgeneral.org/painresearch

- MGH Pain Medicine: http://www.massgeneral.org/painmed/centerforpainmedicine/

- MGH Palliative Care: http://www.massgeneral.org/palliativecare

- MGH Formulary (includes patient teaching handouts in 16 languages): http://www.crtonline.com/crsql/servlet/crtonline

- Intranet site for MGH use to locate pain assessment tools and policies: http://intranet.massgeneral.org/mpc/Pain/index.asp

MGH Cares About Pain Relief

Massachusetts General Hospital

PainRelief@partners.org  http://www.mghpcs.org/painrelief

To be added to or removed from the Pain Relief Connection mailing list, send an email to Paul Arnstein