In the News

- A class-action lawsuit against opioid makers and distributors is a more complex “blame game” than the tobacco case it emulates.
- Opioid prescriptions down 22%, Narcan, CE and PDM Program use up in past five years, but access to care is limited.
- Massachusetts opioid deaths down in 2017 with 85% involving illicit fentanyl. Cocaine & benzos increasingly implicated.
- Impaired driving fatalities rising, with 38% positive for marijuana, 16% opioids and 4% both; with alcohol and drug deaths up.
- FDA takes action against 53 websites marketing unapproved opioids as part of a comprehensive effort to target illegal online sales.
- CMS to remove pain satisfaction scores when prescribed opioids for pain. The meta-analysis of 12 studies of 310,408 patients prescribed opioids. Patients who receive regional anesthesia (epidural / nerve block) are less likely to develop chronic postsurgical pain after thoracotomy or breast cancer surgery. Less than 5% of patients develop iatrogenic dependence or abuse when prescribed opioids for pain. The meta-analysis included 12 studies of 310,408 patients prescribed opioids.
- Generic Buprenorphine/Naloxone sublingual film approved for uses in multiple strengths for opioid addiction.
- Impaired driving fatalities rising, with 38% positive for marijuana, 16% opioids and 4% both; with alcohol and drug deaths up.
- CMS to remove pain satisfaction scores when prescribed opioids for pain. The meta-analysis included 12 studies of 310,408 patients prescribed opioids.
- Pain Resources on the Web
- Pain Education Opportunities
- MGH Pain Calendar & Resources

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

- Anim-Somuah M, Smyth RM, Cyna AM, et al. Epidural versus non-epidural or no analgesia for pain management in labour. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2018 May 21;5:CD000331. Epidural analgesia during labor provides less pain & improved maternal satisfaction than non-epidural methods despite more hypotension, motor blockade, fever, and urinary retention. Prolonged early labor & more frequent use of oxytocin were seen along with less risk of respiratory depression, nausea/vomiting than women receiving opioids.
- Higgins C, Smith BH, Matthews K. Incidence of iatrogenic opioid dependence or abuse in patients with pain who were exposed to opioid analgesic therapy: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Br J Anaesth. 2018;120:1335-44. Less than 5% of patients develop iatrogenic dependence or abuse when prescribed opioids for pain. The meta-analysis included 12 studies of 310,408 patients prescribed opioids.
- Schwenk ES, Viscusi ER, Buvanendran, et al. Consensus guidelines on the use of intravenous ketamine infusions for acute pain from the ASRA, AAAPM & ASA. Reg Anaesth Pain Med. 2018 Jun; 43(5): [ePub]. Evidence supports the use of ketamine for acute pain in a variety of contexts, including as a stand-alone treatment, as an adjunct to opioid therapy. Also see their guideline ketamine for chronic pain.
Journal Watch  [MGHers can obtain articles through the Treadwell home page] (continued)


Pain Resources on the Web:

- Brain imager Dr. Coghill, discusses the physiology of neurologic changes that transition acute to chronic pain.
- Brief synopsis & helpful visual aid for understanding persistent post-surgical pain & risks like pain, opioids & surgical method.
- Is using medical cannabis in addition to or instead of opioids, a sound harm-reduction plan? Research is still unclear.
- Shifting approaches to helping people with chronic pain, by integrating self-management & opioid-sparing strategies.
- Difficult to treat neuropathic pain may result from autoantibodies against the pain-stopping protein CASPR2.
- The 10 favorite pediatric Apps for pain and symptom management compiled by Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota.
- Newly discovered proteins are responsible for creating & maintaining a pain memory, but a SPOT-ON treatment may help.
- New comparative effectiveness trials report for noninvasive nondrug treatments from common chronic pain conditions.

Complementary Integrative Health (formerly called Complementary Alternative Medicine [CAM])

- Meta-analysis of 20,000 patients show acupuncture is effective for chronic pain with sustained benefits.
- Music for pain or anxiety is used before and during a biopsy, but is most effective after the procedure.
- Minimally invasive peripheral nerve stimulator cuts pain by disrupting pain signals before they reach the brain.

Pain-Related Education Opportunities

- Tue – Sat, September 4th – 8th, “Pain Week” 120 hours of CE credits in medicine, nurse/NP, pharmacy & psychology.
- Wed – Sun, September 12th – 16th, “The 17th World Congress on Pain” (largest International conference) Boston, MA
- Wed – Sat, September 26th – 29th, “Pain Management Nursing Annual Conference” Bonita Springs, Florida

MGH Calendar

- Tools & Techniques for Effective Pain Management: Wed, September 27th, FND 325. Click to register.
- Managing Pain Using a Mind-Body Approach; Ellen Slawsby, PhD: Wed, July 25th, Blum Center White 110 info
- Ethical Challenges in Delivering Care During an IV Opioid Shortage: Mon July 30th, O’Keeffe Auditorium
- Palliative Care Grand Rounds are held Wednesday morning from 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM in the Ether Dome. For more info email: Gail Chin

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/centerforpainmedicine/
MGH Palliative Care: http://www.massgeneral.org/palliativecare
MGH Formulary (includes patient teaching handouts in 16 languages): http://www.crlonline.com/crlsql/servlet/crlonline
Intranet site for MGH use to locate pain assessment tools and policies: http://intranet.massgeneral.org/pcs/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