March 2019

In the News

- Director reveals new committee to help guide HEAL (Helping to end addiction long-term) initiative [NIH efforts to address pain & addiction](https://www.nih.gov/).
- Opioid prescribing is down 20% from 2015 to 2017 with reductions in ¾ of counties while overdose deaths rise from illicit fentanyl.
- Medical experts and former White House drug czars indicate news that [opioid prescribing reductions may have hurt pain patients](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29997003).
- FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb resigns leaving a legacy of tackling a tough balancing act of both limiting & assuring opioid accessibility.
- CMS provides guidance on non-opioid options that should be in place for Medicaid patients with chronic pain to reduce opioid use.
- Fentanyl-laced cocaine is now the greatest overdose killer in Massachusetts, with [prescription opioid deaths](https://www.mass.gov) down in latest quarterly data.
- Over 6,000 pain patients surveyed describe the [chilling effect of CDC opioid prescribing guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus19_01.pdf) on how pain patients get treated.

Journal Watch

- Motov, Mann, Drapkin, et al. Intravenous subdissociative-dose ketamine versus morphine for acute geriatric pain in the Emergency Department: A randomized controlled trial. *Am J Emerg Med*. 2019 Feb;37(2):220-227. Older ED medical patients (n=60) received morphine or ketamine for acute pain. More ketamine side effects were reported, but *ketamine analgesia was comparable to morphine*.
- Agarwal SD, Landon BE. Patterns in outpatient benzodiazepine prescribing in the United States. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2019;2(1):e187399. *Co-prescribing benzodiazepines with opioids for chronic pain quadrupled* over a dozen years, increasing the risk of overdose from either.
Journal Watch (continued) [MGHers can obtain articles through the Treadwell home page]


Pain Resources on the Web:

- The American Academy of Pain Medicine launches a new website with resources for pain patients, clinicians and researchers.
- 2019 Global Year Against Pain in the Most Vulnerable Webinar education series addresses State of the Science in Pediatric Pain.
- The National Academies of Science report on medications for opioid use disorder, includes some information on patients with chronic pain.
- The Centers of Excellence in Pain Education (CoEPEs) website has over a dozen free case-based interprofessional pain modules.
- New evidence-based resources added providers & caregivers to better assess and manage pain in older adults including nondrug therapies.

Complementary Integrative Health

- Meta-analysis showed walking is equally effective as exercise to cut pain, disability & fear-avoidance for chronic low back pain patients.
- Reduced vitamin D levels in be a factor in painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy supporting its supplementation in this population.
- Integrative review suggests exercise, massage, heat therapy & relaxation techniques can help elders cut pain in long-term care facilities.
- Entire issue of Pain Management Nursing focuses complementary integrative health, including guided imagery for postoperative pain.
- Spinal Manipulative Therapy delivered by different professionals produce slightly better relief at 1 month than conventional back treatment.
- Peppermint oil was found to be safe and effective in treating pain and global symptoms associated with irritable bowel syndrome.

Pain-Related Education Opportunities

- Sun-Tues June 9-11. International Conference on Opioids 2019; highly acclaimed speakers on the topic. Boston, MA

MGH Pain Calendar

- Tools & Techniques for Effective Pain Management – Tuesday, April 23rd FND 325. Click here Paul Arnstein for more information.
- Palliative Care Grand Rounds are held Wednesdays from 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM in the Ether Dome Email: Gail Chin for more information
- MGH Inter-professional Pain Rounds Jackson 412 First and third Wednesday of month from 12–1pm. Email Tina Toland for more info.

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: https://www.massgeneral.org/TranslationalPainResearch/

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

MGH Formulary (includes patient teaching handouts in 16 languages): http://www.crlonline.com/crsq/servlet/crlonline

MGH Cares About Pain Relief
Massachusetts General Hospital

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