



PAIN RELIEF CONNECTION THE PAIN INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

Provided by MGH Cares About Pain Relief, a program of MGH Patient Care Services

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In the News

- [DEA removed controlled substance restrictions on Epidiolex](#) (oral cannabidiol), allowing for refills for up to a year.
- NICE guidelines recommend [against chronic pain treatment with cannabis](#)-based medicinal products outside of research trials.
- OIG reports 0.3% of [Medicare patients prescribed opioids](#) get high (120MED) or extreme (>240MED) amounts.
- The FDA expanded the approval of [Cymbalta for fibromyalgia in patients aged 13 - 17](#) despite black box warning of suicide risk.
- [AMA recommends policies During COVID-19 that waive testing & counseling requirements for opioid refills](#) while allowing home delivery.
- [NIH cancels Translational Devices to Treat Pain grant](#) application due dates, including 3 deadlines between now and February 2021.
- FDA is addressing [shortages of analgesics & muscle relaxants](#) needed for COVID-19 patients; while [DEA raised the essential drug quotas](#).
- [CMS roadmap to fight the opioid crisis](#) include discouraging overprescribing, & pay for more nonopioid and/or addiction treatments.

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

- Chou R, Hartung D, Turner J, et al. [Opioid treatments for chronic pain. Comparative effectiveness](#) review # 229. *AHRQ Publication No. 20-EHC011*. Placebo RCTs of opioids show a small benefit for pain, function & sleep quality that wane by 6 months. Below 50 MED/day, pain relief is comparable with nonopioids. Higher doses better in short term. Co-prescribing benzodiazepines or gabapentinoids risks overdose.
- McDonagh MS, Selph SS, Buckley DI, et al. Nonopioid pharmacologic treatments for chronic pain. Comparative Effectiveness Review *AHRQ # 228*. Anticonvulsants, SNRI antidepressants, & NSAID [nonopioids yield small improvements < 2/10 in pain](#) and function. Intermediate & long-term outcomes remain unknown. Adverse events caused study withdrawal mostly with gabapentinoids & cannabis.
- Skelly AC, Chou R, Dettori JR, et al. [Noninvasive nonpharmacological treatment for chronic pain](#): a systematic review update. Comparative effectiveness review *AHRQ # 227*. *AHRQ*. Exercise, multidisciplinary rehabilitation, acupuncture, massage, CBT, & and mind-body practices most consistently improve function and/or pain beyond the course of therapy for specific chronic pain conditions. Several nondrug methods are associated with benefits of similar magnitude to opioids that persisted longer than 1 month after completion of therapy.
- Gudín J, Kaufman AG, Datta S. [Are opioids needed to treat chronic low back pain?](#) a review of treatment options and analgesics in development; *J Pain Res*. 2020;13: 1007–1022. With failure of, or no access to nonopioid therapies; selected opioids can be used safely.
- Morasco BJ, Smith N, Dobscha SK, et al. Outcomes of [prescription opioid dose escalation](#) for chronic pain: results from a prospective cohort study. *Pain*. 2020 Jun;161(6):1332-40. Stable doses of long-term opioids may yield small benefits, but dose escalation doesn't.
- Apaydin Cirik V, Efe E The effect of expressed breast milk, swaddling and facilitated tucking methods in reducing the pain caused by [orogastric tube insertion in preterm infants](#): A randomized controlled trial. *Int J Nurs Stud*. 2020 Apr;104:103532. Orogastric tube insertion pain in preterm infants can be reduced by swaddling or facilitated tucking combined with expressed breast milk during the procedure.

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Journal Watch (continued) [MGHers can obtain articles through the [Treadwell home page](#)]

- Eccleston C, Blyth FM, Dear BF, et al. Managing patients with chronic pain during the COVID-19 outbreak: considerations for the rapid introduction of remotely supported (eHealth) pain management services. *Pain*. 2020 May;161(5):889-93. [Covid-19 has transformed telemedicine from a promising approach to an imperative](#). Review of risks, benefits & types of remotely supported pain management.
- Guliani H, Hadjistavropoulos T, Jin S, et al. Utilization of health care resources by long-term care residents as a function of pain status. *Clin J Pain*. 2020 Jun;36(6):472-9. [Nursing home residents with strong pain use more costly health resources](#) (outpatient, meds & hospitalizations).
- Beukenhorst AL, Schultz DM, McBeth J, et al. Are weather conditions associated with chronic musculoskeletal pain? Review of results and methodologies. *Pain*. 2020; Apr;161(4):668-683. Better quality studies link [weather & musculoskeletal pain](#), but better studies are needed.
- Daher A, Carel RS, Tzipi K, et al. The effectiveness of an aerobic exercise training on patients with neck pain during a short- and long-term follow-up. *Clin Rehabil*. 2020 May;34(5):617-629. [Aerobic plus targeted exercises help patients with neck pain](#) cut fear, disability & pain.
- Stephenson JJ, Cepeda MS, Zhang J, et al. The association [between doctor and pharmacy shopping](#) and self-reported misuse and abuse of prescription opioids. *J Pain Res*. 2020 Apr 13: 689-701. Most “shoppers” do it for convenience or comorbid states, not abuse or diversion.

Pain Resources on the Web:

- Body in Mind archives: [bridging the gap between exciting pain science; people in pain; and the clinicians](#) who treat them.
- High prevalence & the [rising health costs & impact of arthritis](#) calls for a national strategy to address this public health problem.
- NAS review of “[Compounded Topical Pain Creams](#)” reviews, safety, effectiveness & use of things put on skin to relieve pain.
- How [using telemedicine with chronic pain patients](#) may increase risk of COVID-19 & developing complications
- Hints for people on [getting through bad arthritis pain days](#) by being proactive & preventing it from getting worse.

Complementary Integrative Health

- Non-invasive Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation ([TENS](#)) [improves fibromyalgia pain and fatigue](#).
- [Hypnosis for children with cancer](#) remains underused & understudied, despite over a dozen studies supporting its use.
- [Convex walking shoes reduced moderate intensity pain](#) in patients with knee arthritis
- The essential [guide to anti-inflammatory pantry foods](#) for coronavirus quarantine of patients with inflammatory arthritis.
- [When in pain, make lemonade?](#) Eriocitrin (from lemons) cuts experimental incisional, chemical & thermal pain.
- Non-invasive [percutaneous bioelectric current stimulation](#) reduces the frequency and intensity of chronic cluster headaches.

Pain-Related Education Opportunities

- Wed-Thu Jun 3-4 NIH: [Technologies for Improving Understanding and Management of Pain](#) Bethesda, MD keynote by Dr. Sean Mackey
- Mon-Fri Jun 15-19 [Harvard Medical School annual Principles & Practices in Pain Medicine](#) Boston, MA
- FDA-approved Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies ([REMS](#)) [for opioids updated online training](#) & resources
- Thurs. Aug 6 @ 4pm EST [Pain Prevention After Musculoskeletal Trauma](#). A Global Year for the Prevention of Pain webinar.

MGH Pain Calendar [Likely postponed through May, check ahead](#)

- Tools & Techniques for Effective Pain Management –. 4.5 CE with 1 pharmacology credit Click here to [register](#) .
- 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

Excellence Every Day Pain Portal Page: <http://www.mghpcs.org/EED/Pain/default.shtml>

MGH Pain Management Center Newsletter: <https://conta.cc/2Hk79qV>

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/crlsql/servlet/crlonline>

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