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In the News

● President’s Opioid Commission issues the combatting addiction and the opioid crisis report that includes updating the CDC guidelines.

● The impact declaring the opioid epidemic a national public health emergency has on the front lines addressing the crisis.

● GAO asks CMS to monitor patients taking opioids & prescribers of high opioid doses & payers to investigate high dose prescribers.

● CMS plans to require old & disabled patients to get opioid prescriptions from selected prescribers & pharmacies. Comment before 1/16/18

● Congressman Latta (R-Ohio) introduced the INFO Act to organize & evaluate impact of opioid laws to halt the epidemic.

● Clinton Foundation report has evidence-based recommendations on safe opioid prescribing & better treating addiction.

● Despite a push to take patients off opioids, doctors need to make professional decisions about what's best for specific patients.

● Massachusetts opioid overdose deaths down 10% as 30% fewer patients get opioids, but 80% fatalities remain from illicit fentanyl.

● FDA warns about nutritional supplement kratom, being increasingly used as an alternative to opioids, and is linked to dozens of deaths.

● Proposed bill would require non-VA prescribers to follow strict opioid limits when treating veterans, and have prescriptions tracked by the VA.

● DEA raid on top pain doctor Forrest Tennant's home for prescribing opioids & receiving consultation fees. Colleagues & patients respond.

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

● Bernardes SF, Forgeron P, Fournier K, et al. Beyond solicitousness: a comprehensive review on informal pain-related social support. Pain. 2017 Nov;158(11):2066-2076. Social support is important with distressing & disabling chronic pain. Although most research has focused on a narrow view of helpful distracting responses or maladaptive solicitous responses; many aspects of social support remain unexplored.


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


- Jackson LK, Imam SN, Braun UK. Opioids in cancer pain: Right or privilege? J Oncol Pract. 2017 Sep;13(9):e809-e814 Although opioids can be used in those with both cancer pain and addiction, sometimes it's best to avoid opioids in those with a substance use disorder.

 Pain Resources on the Web:

- Enteroendocrine cell lining the gut provide new insights into digestion, metabolism, immunity & visceral pain
- The NIH Pain Consortium and Interagency Pain Research Coordinating Committee websites have been updated.
- A child’s pain memories can impact future experiences. Addressing memories and hands-on soothing can help lower or prevent future pain.
- Everything you wanted to know about medical cannabis, from history, to chemistry to therapeutic products/options and more.

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

- What the evidence says about the safety and effectiveness of Mind and Body Practices for Fibromyalgia
- App informs patients about how the mind-body connection affects the chronic pain experience & can guide nondrug pain control methods.
- Virtual Reality relieves a variety of pain conditions as an adjunct to psychotherapy in 15-20 minutes/week sessions. (Flash player required)
- A low FODMAP diet helps with IBS, but could also help with other disease states associated with abdominal pain. (Free registration required)
- Research review shows electrotherapy (e.g. TENS) or acupuncture are best at reducing opioid use after knee replacement surgery.
- Reducing vaccination pain in babies by breast feeding or sucking sugar water is recommended & presented in 7 languages.

 Pain-Related Education Opportunities

- Sun-Tue. Mar 4-6 American Pain Society 2018 Scientific Summit. Understanding Pain Mechanisms Anaheim, CA
- 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.
- Pain Rounds from Tufts U. are webcast live Wednesday morning from 8:00 AM – 9:00. email: William Jackson for more information.
- Palliative Care Grand Rounds are Wednesday mornings from 8AM – 9AM, Ether Dome. email: Margaret Spina 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/centerforpainmedicine/

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

MGH Formulary (includes patient teaching handouts in 16 languages): http://www.criftonline.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.