

# Pain Relief Connection

The Pain Information Newsletter

Provided by MGH Cares About Pain Relief



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## Clinical Focus: Ten Guidelines for Assessing and Treating Pain

This is the second in a series on the principles and guidelines for pain management.

### 3. Take advantage of the patient's capacities to learn and to use their own internal resources

- Involve the patient in creating and assessing the plan of care (this is a JCAHO standard)
- Teach the patient about pain and the many ways it can be treated
- Teach the patient about self-care strategies such as self-hypnosis, meditation, distraction; use biobehavioral techniques in your own practice
- Especially for severe or chronic pain or end-of-life pain, use a multimodality approach and a multidisciplinary team
- *Use of nonpharmacologic approaches should be used to complement, not replace, appropriate analgesic therapy*

## Sharing

A number of individuals, departments, and units have completed, started, or are contemplating pain-related projects. *Pain Relief Connection* would like to help you share your ideas, successes, and lessons learned—including the painful ones—with your colleagues. Call Tom Quinn at 617-726-0746 or send an email to [PainRelief@Partners.org](mailto:PainRelief@Partners.org).

## In the News

**Pain Center Donation Announcement.** Jane Ballantyne, MD, FRCA has announced that Purdue Pharma, makers of several long-acting and widely used opioids, has generously agreed to donate \$3,000,000 to the MGH Pain Center. The money will be used to help achieve a goal shared by the company and the MGH Pain Center: to ensure, through research, education and exemplary clinical care, that pain is treated optimally. The newly named MGH Purdue Pharma Pain Center plans to develop both a Clinical Trials Center and an Educational Program to further this goal. We can all look forward to an exciting period of growth and discovery made possible by this magnificent gift.

**Pain and Aging.** Some of you may have seen the controversial CBS Newsmagazine *60 Minutes* on March 3. It featured the case of a Montana physician prosecuted for murder when 5 elderly patients with terminal illnesses died while hospitalized under his care. He had prescribed opiates to relieve their pain. The case is still in the courts and we will not discuss its merits. The former assistant prosecutor, a nurse, has been quoted as saying that elders “do not feel pain,” including the pain of broken bones. Fortunately she is no longer practicing nursing, but this is only one of numerous news reports and studies demonstrating that

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elders are even more likely to be untreated or under treated for pain than the general population. Studies have also shown that children, women, people with AIDS, and ethnic and racial minorities are also consistently under treated for pain. Pain is a complex cultural issue as well as a medical issue. We all need to raise our level of awareness that the individual needs of the person in front of us transcend any assumptions we have about the groups to which we believe they belong.

**Medication Safety.** This is National Patient Safety Awareness Week (see the information booth in the Main Corridor March 14, 11:30am – 1:30pm). There are many opportunities to improve safe practice for patients in pain. The [Institute for Safe Medication Practices](#) has spent the last 25 years monitoring unsafe practices and advocating improved systems for ordering, delivering, and administering medications. In the most recent issue of *ISMP Medication Safety Alert!* (a monthly electronic newsletter) ISMP points out that “PCA means Patient Controlled Analgesia. Importantly, it does not mean family-controlled, visitor-controlled, or clinician-controlled analgesia. Sometimes we lose sight of this and, occasionally, serious adverse events result.” PCA is not the pump—it is a strategy for effective pain relief in a select population of patients. If someone other than the patient is going to be administering the doses, it is not PCA and the practice carries unique elements of risk. There need to be clear guidelines and parameters, a thorough assessment of the capacity of a parent, spouse or other lay caregiver to assist in delivering the medication, focused teaching for that person, and frequent monitoring by a nurse.

## Education

August 21-25 (Weds – Sat): **Advanced Training in Pediatric End-of-Life Care:** The University of New England (Portland, ME) has partnered with the Jason Program to sponsor a five-day workshop series that will cover a variety of topics related to the unique skills necessary to providing quality care and support to terminally ill children, their families and caregivers. For more information, Phone: 207-797-7688, ext. 4412; Fax: 207-878-4891; email: oce@une.edu

Purdue Pharma has an MNA-approved **Pain Assessment Inservice** for nurses. This presentation will review basic pain assessment and documentation techniques as recommended by JCAHO for hospital accreditation. 1.2 CEU's will be awarded to nurses. Please contact Amy Prasol, Purdue Pharma LP, (800)745 -7445 ext 1030810 or email [aprasol@aol.com](mailto:aprasol@aol.com).

## MGH Pain Calendar

March 19: **Pain Pulse**—MGH’s annual “snap shot” of the state of pain throughout the institution—look for the red envelope on patient care units. We anticipate that as many as 1000 patients will participate! Pain Pulse was previously listed as being scheduled for March 20. *March 19 is the correct date.*

March 25, 8 – 11am or 12 – 3pm (offered twice the same day): **“Care of the Patient at the End of Life: Clinical and Ethical Considerations.”** Includes pain management, spirituality, patient and family coping strategies. Wellman Conference Room. Register through the Center for Clinical and Professional Development, 645 Founders, 617-726-3111.

April 16 – 17 (Tues-Weds): **“Pain Relief Champions Course.”** Multidisciplinary 2-day course open to all MGH clinicians who want to improve knowledge and skills in caring for people with pain and who want to be change agents and resources to other clinicians. LOCATION: Holiday Inn on Blossom Street. Register through the Center for Clinical and Professional Development, 645 Founders, 617-726-3111. Judy Patterson is the registration contact. Contact Tom Quinn at MGH Cares About Pain Relief for further information.

URL notes: Hold your cursor over the link for a second to see the URL. If you are reading this in hard copy, this month’s links are:  
Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP): <http://www.ismp.org>

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