

Pain Relief Connection

The Pain Information Newsletter

Provided by MGH Cares About Pain Relief



Archived issues are available at <http://www.MassGeneral.org/PainRelief>

Volume 3, No. 12

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

December 2004

In this issue:

In the News	Page 1	Pain Resources on the Web	Page 2
Patient Resources	Page 1	Pain-Related Education Opportunities	Page 2
Department of error	Page 1	MGH Pain Calendar	Page 2
Journal Watch	Page 1		

In the News

- Had enough of the negative reports about prescription anti-inflammatory pain medications? Vioxx (rofecoxib) was recently removed from the market because of an increase in cardiac events for patients in a clinical trial of its effect on preventing cancer. It's COX-2 (coxibs) cousins, Celebrex (celecoxib) and Bextra (valdecoxib) have had similar reports of cardiovascular toxicity, but both are still available. Bextra's warning label now also includes information about possible severe and potentially fatal skin reactions. Naproxen (available over-the-counter in Aleve and generics), a more traditional non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), is the latest bad-news story. A significantly increased risk of cardiovascular events was found among patients in the naproxen arm of a multi-armed study. This contradicts previous findings that naproxen may be cardioprotective. It is difficult to tell what the risk vs benefit ratio looks like for these drugs for various patient groups and indications.
 - An [editorial](#) (*JAMA* 2005;293(3):366-368), published online this week (Dec 28), provides a good summary of recent and historical events with these drugs and the clinical, research, and policy implications.
 - The FDA statement on the new [Bextra warnings](#) appears on their web site.
 - News articles on [naproxen](#) and the [NSAID dilemma](#) are also available online.
- In a new and controversial program, the Federal government is trying to improve nursing home care by issuing [report cards](#). In general, pain management has improved nationally, with Massachusetts scores a bit better than the national scores.

Patient Resources

- Information about [liver toxicity](#) from combining acetaminophen (Tylenol) and alcohol.
- [The Role of Hypnosis For Pain Management](#)—article in [American Pain Foundation Pain Monitor](#).
- [“Do medications really expire?”](#) On [Medscape](#)—free registration required.

Department of Error

- Problems with [“Patient Controlled Analgesia by Proxy.”](#) [The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations](#) (JCAHO) has issued a [“Sentinel Event Alert”](#) on improper use of patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) devices by well-meaning but inadequately prepared lay and professional caregivers. For most patients this is an effective and safe way to manage pain: patients respond to their pain by pushing a button and delivering a pre-determined amount (‘demand’ dose) of opioid analgesic. When other people try to be helpful and push the button for the patient, they run the risk of accidental overdose. Safe use of these devices for pain management requires careful selection of patients; appropriate knowledge and skills of clinicians; detailed education of patient and family; and frequent patient monitoring by a clinician.

Journal Watch (journal titles followed by [M] have full text free access on MGH computers)

- Goodsell D. [The Molecular Perspective: Morphine](#). *The Oncologist* 2004;9:717-718 (Open access).
- Hanks-Bell M, et al. [Pain Assessment and Management in Aging](#). *The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*. Aug 31, 2004;9(3) (Open access)

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Pain Resources on the Web

- Fine PG, et al. [Meeting the Challenges in Cancer Pain Management](#). *The Journal of Supportive Oncology*. Nov/Dec 2004;2(6)(Supp 4):5-21. (Open access). Free approved nursing contact hours available.
- [Chronic Pain: Overcoming Treatment Barriers for Effective Outcomes](#). Free continuing education offering for physicians, nurses, and pharmacists. Requires free registration on [Medscape](#).
- [Electronic pain diaries for children](#). A review by [Bandolier](#), a UK-based service which reviews the evidence on clinical practices.
- The [Massachusetts Pain Initiative](#) has made its new [Pain Management Pocket Tool](#) available as a PDF.
- Draft statement of the [NIH State-of-the-Science Conference on Improving End-of-Life Care](#), Dec 6 – 8, 2004

Pain-Related Education Opportunities

- [Master of Science in Pain Research, Education, and Policy](#), Tufts University Medical School. An interdisciplinary postgraduate program. For info call 617-636-8541 or e-mail jconnolly@tufts-NEMC.org. (<http://www.tufts.edu/med/prep/>)
- [Coordinating Care at the End of Life: The Role of Hospice](#). The [American Hospice Foundation](#) announces a new electronic (CD-ROM) CE course with contact hours for nurses, social workers and case managers. Contact Marsha Nelson, at 202-223-0204, Ext. 206 or mnelson@americanhospice.org. (<http://www.americanhospice.org/news/SelfStudy.htm>)

MGH Pain Calendar

- Jan 10 (Mon) 11:00am – 12:00N **Coping with Cancer Pain** (for patients and families), featuring Annabel Edwards, ANP, Cancer Pain Team Nurse Practitioner. Cancer Resource Room, Cox 1st floor. Sponsored by HOPES Program.
- Mar 15 (Tue) 8:00am – 8:00pm **Pain Knowledge and Skills Day**. Walcott Conference Room, Wang 1.
- April 21-22 (Thu – Fri) 7:30am – 4:30pm **Annual Pain Relief Champions Course**. Walcott Conference Room, Wang 1.

Chronic Pain Rounds are held Mondays at 12:00N in the Clinics 3 amphitheatre. Of note:

Jan 3 **Pediatric Burn Pain**. Pat O'Brien, RN – SBI

Jan 10 **Sleep Disorder & Pain**. Kenneth Sassower, M.D.

Cancer Pain Rounds are held Wednesdays at 12:00N in the Cox 8 Conference Room.

Palliative Care Grand Rounds are held Wednesdays at 8:00am in the Ether Dome

MGH Pain Resources:

PainRelief web site: <http://www.massgeneral.org/painrelief/>

Previous issues of *Pain Relief Connection*: <http://www.massgeneral.org/painrelief/Newsletter>

Previous Pain Topics articles: http://www.massgeneral.org/painrelief/Pain%20Topics/mghpain_paintopics_index.htm

Patient Care Services Pain Resource Center: http://pcs.mgh.harvard.edu/Secure/Clinical_Resources/Pain_Resources.asp

CCPD educational offerings: http://pcs.mgh.harvard.edu/CCPD/Educational_Offerings/cpd_offerings_calendar.asp

Treadwell Library (Magic): <http://magic.mgh.harvard.edu/>

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

Partners Handbook: <http://is.partners.org/handbook/>

Primary Care Office InSite (PCOI) (Clinician and patient information): http://oi.mgh.harvard.edu/pcoi/frontpage_frames.asp

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:

JAMA editorial on Coxibs: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/293.3.366v1>

FDA Bextra warnings: <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/ANSWERS/2004/ANS01331.html>

AP story on naproxen: http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&e=2&u=ap/20041221/ap_on_he_me/study_halted

Boston Globe article on NSAIDs: http://www.boston.com/news/globe/health_science/articles/2004/12/28/pain_relief_story/

Nursing homes: http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2004/12/13/nursing_homes_show_uneven_gains?mode=PFN

Tylenol liver toxicity: http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2004/12/13/nursing_homes_show_uneven_gains?mode=PF

Hypnosis for pain management: <http://www.painfoundation.org/eNews2004/1204/fishmanhypnosis.htm>

American Pain Foundation: <http://www.painfoundation.org/>

Do medications expire? <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/460159>

PCA Sentinel Event Alert: http://www.jcaho.org/about+us/news+letters/sentinel+event+alert/sea_33.htm

Morphine molecular perspective: <http://theoncologist.alphamedpress.org/cgi/content/full/9/6/717>

Pain Assessment in Aging: http://www.nursingworld.org/ojin/topic21/Tpc21_6.htm

Cancer Pain Management CE offering: <http://www.supportiveoncology.net/journal/0206s4.html>

Electronic Pain Diaries for Children: <http://www.jr2.ox.ac.uk/bandolier/booth/JIA/elecpain.html>

Chronic pain CE offering: <http://www.medscape.com/viewprogram/3635?src=mp>

MassPI Pain Management Pocket Tool: <http://www.masspaininitiative.org/PainManagementPocketTool.pdf>

Draft End-of-Life care statement: <http://consensus.nih.gov/ta/024/024EndOfLifepostconfINTRO.htm>

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