

Pain Relief Connection

The Pain Information Newsletter

Provided by MGH Cares About Pain Relief



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

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Journal Watch

- An excellent review article on the current understanding of the mechanisms of pain was published this month in [Annals of Internal Medicine](#) (16 March 2004;140(6):441-451). Written by MGH pain researcher Clifford Woolf, [Pain: Moving from Symptom Control toward Mechanism-Specific Pharmacologic Management](#), provides a good dose of clinical insight along with the physiology. (Available via [Magic](#) on MGH computers)
- A new MGH nursing procedure for administration of IV lidocaine for severe or neuropathic pain is being developed. While not a new application for lidocaine, most clinicians are probably unfamiliar with it. A recent article can help fill the knowledge gap: [How to Initiate and Monitor Infusional Lidocaine for Severe and/or Neuropathic Pain](#) in [Journal of Supportive Oncology](#) (Jan/Feb 2004;2(1):90-94). (Free full text available).
- A major clinical challenge is pain assessment in elders, especially those with cognitive impairment. Pain in elders is consistently unrecognized and under treated. A new research article strongly suggests that elders with mild to moderate cognitive impairment can successfully use simple verbal pain scales and the standard 0 – 10 horizontal scale. The authors emphasize that careful explanation of the instruments is necessary and that additional assessment practices are required to get the full picture. [A Comparison of Five Pain Assessment Scales for Nursing Home Residents with Varying Degrees of Cognitive Impairment](#), [Journal of Pain and Symptom Management](#) (3 Mar 2004;27(3):196-205) (Available via [Magic](#) on MGH computers)

Department of Error

- In the February 2004 issue the name of the author of "[Safe Use of Over-the-Counter Pain Relievers](#)" was misspelled. The author is Howard DeMonaco. We regret the error.
- The March issue of the [ISMP Nurse Advise-ERR](#), a free electronic newsletter devoted to preventing errors in health care, highlighted a case of hydromorphone (Dilaudid) overdose. The patient was taking 4 mg PO for pain at home, and an order for 2-4 mg IV was written on admission. Neither the prescribing physician nor administering nurse were aware that there is a dramatic difference between the equivalent (i.e., equianalgesic) oral and parenteral doses of hydromorphone. Parenteral hydromorphone is 3-5 times more potent than the oral forms. For additional discussion about hydromorphone see the [Feb 2003 issue](#) of *Pain Relief Connection*, the [equianalgesic opioid table](#) on the [PainRelief](#) web site, and the [MGH drug formulary](#).

Pain Pulse 2004

Pain Pulse, the annual "snap shot" survey of the state of pain at MGH was held March 24. Because so much of health care is provided in the ambulatory setting, this year we expanded to the clinics and off-site centers. We had 20 clinics participating for the first time, in addition to the inpatient units that have participated for 5 years. We surveyed a record number of patients (1470) in a record number of clinical sites (70). 57% of respondents reported that they had experienced pain in the previous 24 hours, a number that is consistent with national surveys of the prevalence of pain. A snap shot survey, even of this magnitude, cannot tell us how well we are doing at assessing and managing pain. The primary benefit of Pain Pulse is to raise consciousness about the prevalence of pain across all clinical services and patient populations. A more detailed report will appear in *Caring Headlines* this Spring.

MGH Cares About Pain Relief

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To be added to or removed from the *Pain Relief Connection* mailing list, send an email to PainRelief@Partners.org

New Pain Resources

- Nathan Cherny, MD, a well-known clinician in pain and palliative care circles, has recently made available the Shaare Zedek [Cancer Pain and Palliative Care Reference Database](#).
- Purdue Pharma has developed a Pain Management Advocacy Toolkit that provides a wealth of information and resources for educators, community groups, and clinicians. To obtain a copy, contact Joan Zooper at 203-588-4118 or joan.zooper@pharma.com.

Pain-Related Education Opportunities

- [Mayday Pain & Society Fellowship: A Media and Policy Initiative](#) “trains physicians, nurses, social workers, scientists, and legal scholars in the pain management community to go beyond their own professional pursuits to become thought leaders and advocates for change in the understanding and management of pain in the United States and Canada.”
- June 23 – 27 (Wed – Sun): [Principles and Practice of Pain Medicine](#). Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel, Boston. Harvard Medical School, Department of Continuing Education & Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Department of Anesthesia.
- June 9 – 10 (Wed – Thurs). **Brigham & Women’s Hospital 4th annual pain management conference**. At the Charles Hotel in Cambridge. The keynote speaker will be Chris Pasero, RN, co-author (with Margo McCaffery, RN, MSN) of [Pain: Clinical Manual 2nd Ed](#). CEU’s for pharmacy and nursing are available. For registration information, call 617-732-6480.
- Jun 18 (Fri): **The Cellular Basis of Suffering: A neuroscience perspective on the biology of suffering**, 1:00-5:00pm, Jimmy Fund Auditorium, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Featuring Eduardo Bruera, MD and MGH’s Clifford Woolf, MD. Sponsored by Dana Farber/Harvard Cancer Center Program in Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Medicine. A reception will follow the symposium. To RSVP for the event please contact Wendy Katz, 617-724-9509 or wkatz@partners.org

MGH Pain Calendar

- **The following pain-related Palliative Care Grand Rounds presentations are Wednesdays at 8:00am in the Ether Dome:**
 - April 7: **Update on Pain Management**—Diane Meier
 - April 21: **Traditional and Contemporary Controversies in Cancer Pain Management**—Paul Glare
- **Chronic Pain Rounds are held each Monday at 12:00N in the Clinics 3 Auditorium. Lunch is provided. Of note:**
 - April 5: **The Massachusetts Pain Initiative: Current Legislative and Regulatory Issues Affecting Pain Management**—Amy Goldstein and Tom Quinn
 - April 12: **Neurosurgical Approaches for the Management of Chronic Pain**—Emad Eskandar.
 - April 19: **Bone Cancer Pain in Palliative Care**—Annabel Edwards.
- Apr 12 (Mon) 11:00pm – 12:00pm **Conversations About Cancer Pain** (for patients and families). Cancer Resource Room, Cox 1st floor. Sponsored by HOPES Program.

***Pain Relief Champions** course. *Day 1 April 26, Wellman Conf Room; Day 2 May 18 Walcott Conf Room*. Open to all clinical disciplines. CNE/CME will be available. Free to MGH and Shriners clinicians; \$30 each day for other Partners clinicians, \$60 each day for all others. May attend either or both days. For application contact Judy Patterson at 617-724-5554/e-mail jlpatrick@partners.org or Tom Quinn 617-726-0746/e-mail tquinn1@partners.org. The course brochure and application form are available on the [PainRelief](#) web site.

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:

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

Magic: <http://magic.mgh.harvard.edu/>

Pain: Clinical Manual 2nd Ed: <http://www3.us.elsevierhealth.com/PAIN/>

Annals of Internal Medicine: <http://www.annals.org/>

Journal of Supportive Oncology: <http://www.supportiveoncology.net/>

Journal of Pain and Symptom Management: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/08853924>

“Safe Use of Over-the-Counter Pain Relievers”: <http://tinyurl.com/39akn> (shortened from original at <http://tinyurl.com/>)

Nurse Advise-ERR: <http://www.ismp.org/NursingArticles/Issues/NurseAdviseERR200403.pdf>

Equianalgesic opioid table: http://www.massgeneral.org/painrelief/mghpain_equichart.htm

MGH drug formulary: <http://www.crlonline.com/crlsql/servlet/crlonline>

Cancer Pain and Palliative Care Reference Database: <http://www.chernydatabase.org/>

Mayday Fellowship: <http://www.painandhealth.org/maydayfellows/fellows.html>

Principles and Practice of Pain Medicine: <http://tinyurl.com/396sj> (shortened from original at <http://tinyurl.com/>)

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