

Pain Relief Connection

The Pain Information Newsletter

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

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



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In the News

- With feedback from readers and targeted “experts” this spring, a new resource is on the [PainRelief](#) web site, [The Intersection of Pain Management and Addictive Illness](#). Updated and reflecting best practices, it was officially launched last week at the [Alliance of State Pain Initiatives](#) meeting, held in Boston.
- Last month’s article in *Newsweek*, “[The Changing Science of Pain](#)” has received mixed reviews. While getting kudos for highlighting the public health problem of pain, it has been criticized for errors and editing. A morphine tamper-resistant product being developed was wrongly described. The article has also been criticized for continuing to use the term “narcotic” rather than “opioid” while overstating the risk of addiction in acute pain. A [response](#) from the American pain Foundation is published on their web site.
- PCOI (accessible only on Partners-build computers) has announced upgrades to its [guideline on the Management of Acute Low Back Pain](#) with updated information on evaluation, treatment and referrals. They have also revised the [patient handouts](#) on low back pain.
- The Food and Drug Administration has [approved](#) Lyrica (pregabalin) as the first drug to treat [fibromyalgia](#). A consumer article, [Living with Fibromyalgia, First Drug Approved](#), on the FDA web site is also available.

Journal Watch ([M] = full text free access on MGH computers; [O] = open access; [R] = free registration required)

Did you know that MGHers can obtain articles from journals to which Treadwell Library does not subscribe? From the [Treadwell home page](#), go to Library Services, then Copying/Borrowing.

- The [current issue](#) of *Journal of Rehabilitation Research & Development*, [O] a peer-reviewed publication of the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#), is devoted to issues of pain assessment and management. Topics include: pain & depression; PTSD & pain; pain & dementia; pain severity assessment in nursing homes; pain & palliative care; CAM for chronic pain; pain & obesity; cognitive impairment & pain management; and others. The web site also contains a “[Pain/Pain Management Topic Cluster List](#),” (updated only through mid-2006).
- Todd KH, et al. [Pain in the Emergency Department: Results of the Pain and Emergency Medicine Initiative \(PEMI\) Multicenter Study](#). *Journal of Pain*. 2007 Jun;8(6):460-6. Dr. Todd has done many ED pain-related studies. This study concludes, that high intensity pain and suboptimal pain management are prevalent in a large network of Eds across United States and Canada. “There is much room for improvement in this area.”
- Gaufberg SV, et al. [Expanding the use of topical anesthesia in wound management: sequential layered application of topical lidocaine with epinephrine](#). *American Journal of Emergency Medicine*. [M] 2007 May;25(4):379-84. Direct application of analgesics/anesthetics to intact or broken skin is getting increasing attention in the research literature. Despite a lower risk for systemic side effects and toxicity, indiscriminate use over large areas of skin can be serious. Recent reports of deaths from both prescription and over-the-counter topical medications for pain provide ample evidence of the need for clear patient education and monitoring.
- Friedrichsdorf SJ, et al. [Breakthrough Pain in Children with Cancer](#). *Journal of Pain & Symptom Management*. [M] 2007 Jun 5; [Epub ahead of print] Breakthrough pain in adults has received a fair amount of attention. The same cannot be said of breakthrough pain in children. This paper reports on a small study in Australia that confirms that the breakthrough pain experience of children is similar to that of adults.

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Massachusetts General Hospital

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- Povedano M, et al. [Cognitive function impairment in patients with neuropathic pain under standard conditions of care](#). *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*. [M] 2007 Jan;33(1):78-89. Cognitive effects of medications are commonly described. This paper addresses the effect of pain, especially neuropathic pain, on clarity of thinking.

Medication Safety

- Medication errors frequently include analgesics. In two recent “Top 10” lists of errors, analgesics figured prominently.
 - In a [Medscape](#) report on errors that lead to ED visits, 4 of the ten were analgesics. Only one was an opioid (hydrocodone + acetaminophen). [The "Top 10" Drug Errors and How to Prevent Them](#).
 - A recent issue of the *ISMP Nurse Advise-ERR* reports that 4 of the top ten errors with automatic dispensing cabinets were analgesics. The most errors were reported for morphine, one of 3 opioids on the list.
- Another report in *ISMP Nurse Advise-ERR* highlights the risk of opioid overdose when fentanyl patches are “lost” on the patient’s body. A thorough search is required before applying another when it is known or suspected that the patient has been using the patch.

Pain Resources for Patients

- [Benefits of Support Groups and Psychological Intervention](#) National Pain Foundation.
- *Treatment Options: A Guide for People Living with Pain* is a new booklet produced by the [American Pain Foundation](#). It is available for purchase on their website (download the [order form](#)), and is available as a PDF for [free download](#) from their site (careful—it’s 84 pages long!).

Pain Resources on the Web

- [Cancer Pain Management in Children](#) Texas Children’s Cancer Center.
- [Non-opioid pain therapies](#) Pain Treatment Topics
- [Assessing Pain in Older Adults with Dementia](#).
- New European breakthrough pain resource, [Breakthroughpain.eu](#)
- Multiple pain articles in [Topics in Advanced Practice Nursing](#)
- [Battling Pain in Sickle Cell Disease: Fighting Racism, Stigma and Ignorance](#)
- [Pain and Palliative Care Reporter](#)

Pain Education on the Web [free registration required on most sites]

- [Opioid Pharmacology and Considerations in Pain Management](#) [CPE] *US Pharmacist*
- [Managing Chronic Mild-to-Moderate Pain Due to Rheumatoid Arthritis: The Cardiovascular Considerations Associated With Therapeutic Options](#). CME; CNE; CPE
- [Highlights of the American Pain Society \(APS\) 26th Annual Scientific Meeting](#) CME; CNE; CPE

MGH Pain Calendar

- *Chronic Pain Rounds are held Mondays at 12:00N in the Cox 8 Conference Room*. Mailing list: ttolandatpartnersdotorg
- *Palliative Care Grand Rounds are held Wednesdays at 8:00am in the Ether Dome*. Mailing list: nalawlessatpartnersdotorg

MGH Pain Resources:

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

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

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

MGH Pain Resources Page: http://www.massgeneral.org/painrelief/MGH_Pain_Resources.htm

CCPD educational offerings: http://www.massgeneral.org/pcs/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

Toolbox for Pain Assessment & Management: <http://intranet.massgeneral.org/paintoolbox/>

MESAC intranet site: <http://intranet.massgeneral.org/mesac/index.htm>

MGH Safety Reporting System: <http://safety.massgeneral.org/>

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