

## Pain Pulse Survey 2003

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**Description:** Pain Pulse is an annual "snap shot" of pain at MGH conducted by MGH Cares About Pain Relief. Nearly all inpatient units, the cancer center, same-day surgery, the ER, and ambulatory gynecology participated in 2003. Patients are asked an initial question: "Have you had pain in the past 24 hours?" Patients who respond "Yes" are asked 2 more questions: "What is the severity of pain now?" "How much has pain interfered with your ability to enjoy life in the past 24 hours?" Both of these are answered using a 0-10 scale. Adjustments are made for children. The method of instrument administration is not as rigorous as would be required in a research project.

**Purpose:** The intent of Pain Pulse is to show the prevalence of pain across the institution and to raise consciousness about the problem of pain among patients and clinicians. It is not intended to be a measure of the institution's progress toward improved pain management, although in conjunction with other methods it could conceivably be considered a part of a data collection "package" of pain management-related indicators at Mass General. It is not known if it is possible to use Pain Pulse data to compare MGH to other institutions. MGH has no standard for pain severity, so by itself Pain Pulse is not a quality marker.

**Interpretation:** Of concern is that two years in a row 13% of patients with pain reported pain severity of 8-10 on a 0-10 scale (0 = no pain; 10 = the worst pain imaginable). There were no significant differences across the inpatient-outpatient spectrum, nor across services (i.e., medicine vs surgery): the range of reported severe pain was 12-14%. There were no reports of severe pain among children, but the small numbers in a "snap-shot" survey make interpretation hazardous. The mean pain score is unchanged from 2002. Furthermore, two years in a row the quality of life question reflected a greater than 25% incidence of major interference by pain in the ability to enjoy life among patients who reported pain. A possibly encouraging note (too early to tell if it will be a trend) is that of patients reporting pain, there was a marked decrease in moderate pain (4-7), with a concomitant increase in mild pain.

Results for Pain Pulse 2003 are summarized on the next page, with comparisons to 2002 data. The survey and statistical methods were changed in 2002, so comparisons to 1999 and 2000 data are only partially valid (1999 method: patients not reporting pain in the past 24 hours were recorded as having 0 pain; 2002 method: patients reporting no pain in past 24 hours were excluded from pain severity calculations). Using the 1999 method, the percentage of patients with severe pain has remained stable over 5 years (there was no Pain Pulse Survey in 2001). However, there has been a slight decrease each year in the percentage of patients reporting a severe negative impact on their quality of life (i.e., in the 8-10 range).

**Unit-by-unit results:** Individual unit results are available to the leadership of those units, but the results should be viewed with extreme caution. Even the largest inpatient unit has too few patients on Pain Pulse day to provide meaningful information about the general prevalence of pain for their population. Pain Pulse can tell us nothing about how well that unit routinely manages pain.

**Future:** Only a limited number of outpatients were surveyed, and none of the off-site MGH Health Centers have been included to date in Pain Pulse. Expanding the survey to more outpatient sites is planned for next year. A different QI or research design is needed in order to measure institutional progress. A longitudinal study, utilizing chart audits and/or focused computerized medical record data mining, possibly combined with patient questionnaires (to address QOL issues), should be considered.

## MGH Cares About Pain Relief Massachusetts General Hospital Pain Pulse 2002, 2003

### SUMMARY

	2002	2003
Number of Hospital units	50 (30% increase)	57 (12% increase)
# Surveys returned (Adult)	890 (34% increase)	1093 (19% increase)
# Respondents (Adult)	748 (84%)	951(87%)
# Surveys returned (Pediatric)	37 (40% increase)	44 (16% increase)
# Respondents (Pediatric)	32 (86%)	18 (41%)
Total # surveys returned	928 (34% increase)	1137 (18% increase)
Total # respondents	783 (84%)	969 (85%)

### ALL RESPONDENTS

	928	1137
# Surveys Returned	783 (84%)	969 (85%)
# Respondents	783 (84%)	969 (85%)
Have you had pain in past 24 hours?	Yes = 419 (54%) No = 364 (46%)	Yes = 518 (53%) No = 451 (47%)
How much pain are you having now?	0 = 10% 1 - 3 = 32% 4 - 7 = 46% 8 - 10 = 13% Mean score = 4.2 NA = 6 (1%)	0 = 8% 1 - 3 = 41% 4 - 7 = 39% 8 - 10 = 13% Mean score = 4.1 NA = 12 (2%)
How much has pain interfered with enjoyment of life in past 24 hours?	0 = 17% 1 - 3 = 20% 4 - 7 = 38% 8 - 10 = 28% Mean score = 5.0 NA = 23 (6%)	0 = 13% 1 - 3 = 24% 4 - 7 = 38% 8 - 10 = 26% Mean score = 5.0 NA = 17 (3%)

0 = no pain  
1-3 = mild pain  
4-7 = moderate pain  
8-10 = severe pain  
NA = No answer to that question

Non-Participation Reasons	2002	2003
Patient declined:	28 19.3%	13 7.7%
Patient off floor:	9 6.2%	7 4.2%
Cognitive impairment:	55 37.9%	52 31%
Pt. prefers non-numeric assessment:	1 0.7%	1 0.6%
Sedated:	30 20.7%	26 15.5%
Comatose:	9 6.2%	12 7.1%
Language barrier:	14 9.7%	12 7.1%
Other reason:	8 5.5%	34 20.2%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>145 100%</b>	<b>168 100%</b>

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