

# 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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Winter Holiday Issue

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### In this issue:

Equianalgesic Calculator Update	Page 1	Pain-Related Education Opportunities	Page 2
Journal Watch	Page 1	MGH Pain Calendar	Page 2

**For all those celebrating one or more winter holidays this season, we wish you Happy Holidays. This week we also had the Winter Solstice, so we can now look forward to 6 months of continually lengthening days!**

## Equianalgesic Calculator Update

A year and a half ago (*Pain Relief Connection* Vol 1 #7, July 22, 2002, p 3-6) we published a “Pain Topics” article on electronic equianalgesic dose calculators. That review was revised in April of this year to highlight the availability of the [Hopkins Opioid Program](#) for the Palm operating system. A second revision is now necessary: the [GlobalRPh.com](#) calculator, reviewed in the original article, has released a major upgrade that should prove useful to many clinicians. While there is still a [free web-based version available](#), the very inexpensive downloadable versions have useful new features:

- there are now [Windows PC](#), [Palm](#), and [Pocket PC](#) versions available
- the user can change the values in the equianalgesic table so that they are consistent with specific institutional practice
- two different methods for rotating to methadone are provided
- easier fentanyl patch conversion
- ability to adjust calculated dose to account for incomplete cross tolerance
- ability to print a summary of your calculations
- ability to convert up to 3 different opioids to a single opioid

The downloadable versions are available for a free, fully functional, 14-day trial. The newly revised review will be available on the [PainRelief](#) web site in January 2004 (click the “Pain Topics” button).

## Journal Watch

Jane Ballantyne, MD, Director of the MGH Pain Center, has an article in the current issue of [The Oncologist](#), [“Chronic Pain Following Treatment for Cancer: The Role of Opioids.”](#) The article is freely available from any computer. CME credit is available for completing the accompanying test. Free registration is required to access the CME page.

An article in [Pain Management Nursing](#) Dec 2003;4(4):171-175, reminds us – once again – that clinicians do a poor job of estimating patients’ pain. [“Accuracy of emergency nurses in assessment of patients’ pain.”](#) reports a study comparing patient’s and nurse’s numerical pain severity rating in both the triage and clinical areas of an emergency department. The study’s authors conclude that “impressions” and “assumptions” form the basis for nurse’s rating of their patients’ pain, pointing out that there were wide variations based on the patient’s diagnosis or chief complaint. In 9 diagnostic categories (e.g., headaches, abdominal pain, musculoskeletal, etc.) there was patient-nurse concordance in pain ratings of 0% to no greater than 50% (157 patients, 37 nurses). This study confirms the results of several other investigations showing poor correlation between physician and/or nurse rating of pain severity compared to the patient’s rating. Across studies in varying settings clinicians invariably and significantly underestimate patient’s pain, sometimes grossly. This consistent finding is the basis of the oft-repeated principle that the patient’s self report provides the most accurate and useful information on pain severity. *(Unfortunately, the full text of this article is available only to subscribers)*

### MGH Cares About Pain Relief

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The opening sentence in a recent article on pharmacologic management of pain succinctly states an important pain management principle: “The most effective treatment for all pain is a multimodal and balanced approach combining pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic strategies.”\* Pharmacologic therapy is almost always recognized as the “mainstay” of treatment for most pain, but too often, especially in an acute care setting, we have an unbalanced approach that emphasizes medication and ignores other modalities. The September 2003 issue of [Nursing Clinics of North America](#) is devoted to chronic pain management and includes review articles on cognitive-behavioral and physical modalities, and an article on potential uses of alternative and complementary therapies.

**The entire full text of all 11 articles are available free online until Jan 1, 2004. This journal is usually available to the MGH community only via hard copy at the Treadwell Library.**

\*Gordon DB. Nonopioid and adjuvant analgesics in chronic pain management: strategies for effective use. [Nursing Clinics of North America](#) Sept 2003;38(3):447-464

## Pain-Related Education Opportunities

June 9 – 10 (Weds – Thurs). **Brigham & Women’s Hospital 4th annual pain management conference.** At the Charles Hotel in Cambridge. Continuing education units for nurses and pharmacists will be available. The keynote speaker will be Chris Pasero, RN, co-author (with Margo McCaffery, RN, MSN) of [Pain: Clinical Manual 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.](#) Additional details TBA.

## MGH Pain Calendar

Jan 12 (Mon) 11:00am – 12:00N **Conversations About Cancer Pain** (for patients and families) Cancer Resource Room, Cox 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Sponsored by HOPES Program.

**The following pain-related Palliative Care Grand Rounds presentations are on Wednesdays at 8:00am in the Ether Dome:**

Feb 11 **Radiation Mucositis and Skin Care** Sarah Usher, RN, MSN, OCN, MGH Radiation Oncology

Feb 25 **Cancer Pain and Symptom Management: What does the Evidence Show?** Daniel Carr, MD Saltonstall professor of Pain Research Tufts Medical School

**Pain Relief Champions** course. **Dates TBA.** Open to all disciplines. CE/CME/CPE will be available. Free to MGH and Shriners clinicians; \$60 for other Partners clinicians, \$120 for all others. Must attend both days. Stay tuned 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:

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

Center for Clinical & Prof. Development:

[http://pcs.mgh.harvard.edu/CCPD/Educational\\_Offerings/cpd\\_offerings\\_calendar.asp](http://pcs.mgh.harvard.edu/CCPD/Educational_Offerings/cpd_offerings_calendar.asp)

Patient Care Services Pain Resource Center: [http://pcs.mgh.harvard.edu/Secure/Clinical\\_Resources/Pain\\_Resources.asp](http://pcs.mgh.harvard.edu/Secure/Clinical_Resources/Pain_Resources.asp)

Magic—Treadwell Library’s electronic catalog: <http://magic.mgh.harvard.edu>

Hopkins Opioid Program: <http://www.hopkinskimmeltcancercenter.org/specialtycenters/hop.cfm>

GlobalRPH.com: <http://www.globalrph.com/index.htm>

Free GlobalRPh.com calculator (web-based): <http://www.globalrph.com/narcoticonv.htm>

GlobalRPh.com calculator (Windows PC version): [http://www.globalrph.com/narcotic\\_converter.htm](http://www.globalrph.com/narcotic_converter.htm)

GlobalRPh.com calculator (PDA version): [http://www.globalrph.com/narcotic\\_pda.htm](http://www.globalrph.com/narcotic_pda.htm)

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

*The Oncologist*: <http://theoncologist.alphamedpress.org/>

Opioids for chronic cancer pain article: <http://theoncologist.alphamedpress.org/cgi/content/full/8/6/567>

*Pain Management Nursing*:

<http://www2.painmanagementnursing.org/scripts/om.dll/serve?action=searchDB&searchdbfor=home&id=jpmn>

Estimating pain article:

<http://www2.painmanagementnursing.org/scripts/om.dll/serve?action=searchDB&searchDBfor=art&artType=full&id=as152490420300033x>

*Nursing Clinics of North America*: <http://nursing.theclinics.com/issues>

*Pain: Clinical Manual*: <http://www3.us.elsevierhealth.com/PAIN/>

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