Non-narcotic Management of Pain

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Opioids Are Not The Default Chronic Pain Treatment

- They don’t address the physiologic mechanisms of pain
- They have not been shown to improve function
- They have not been studied in longer-term trials
- Studies suggest patients may have worse quality of life and higher pain levels
- Opioids can cause a state of hyperalgesia
Case Formulation

• Name the physiologic type of pain
• Identify the acuity:
  – Acute
  – Chronic
  – Recurrent
  – Terminal
• Identify contributing factors and barriers
• Assess disease burden
• What treatments are indicated?
• Are interventional approaches warranted?
• Develop a flare plan
• Is this patient a candidate for long-term opioids?
Identify Contributing Factors and Barriers

- **Contributing factors** amplify or perpetuate pain but are not the original cause
  - Posture
  - Stress
  - Occupational factors
- **Barriers** are factors that prevent making a complete pain assessment or rendering optimal treatment
  - Insurance non-coverage
  - Low motivation
  - Language barrier
  - Transportation/limited resources
  - Chemical dependency
Definition of a Pain Flare

- A *pain flare* in a chronic pain patient is a *temporary* increase in pain *intensity* from a more stable baseline pain with otherwise similar characteristics, and not due to advancing disease or a new condition.

- **Axiom:** For every chronic pain condition there will always be another flare no matter what type of chronic pain and what dose of medicine.
Pain Flare-Medication Vicious Cycle

Baseline chronic pain → Pain flare

Misinterpretation as successful medication adjustment

Resolution → Medication increase

Misinterpretation as disease progression or tolerance to opioid
Pseudotolerance

- The apparent failure of medication to maintain stable control of chronic pain resulting in repeated dose escalations during pain flares, without a return to baseline doses once pain flare resolves.
Assess Disease Burden

Goals of Pain Management in Palliative Care vs. Chronic Pain

- Return to work
- Self-care
- Pt assumes responsibility for symptom management
- Increase activity
- Functional restoration
- Minimize health care utilization

Priority

Disease burden

Restorative goals
Palliative goals

- Comfort
- Support
- Ease pain/suffering

None
Low
Medium
High
End of Life
Identify Physiologic Types of Pain

- Nociceptive
- Inflammatory
- Mechanical
- Neuropathic
- Bone
- Muscular
- Psychogenic
Inflammatory Pain

**Diagnosis**

- Clinical setting
  - Postoperative
  - Trauma
  - Infection
  - Arthritis
- Distribution
  - Joints
  - Area of infection or trauma
  - Surgical incision
- Quality
  - Aching
  - Throbbing
  - Worse with movement
- Physical findings
  - Warm
  - Red
  - Swollen

**Drug Management**

- NSAID
  - Ibuprofen
  - Naproxen
  - Ketorolac (IV form)
  - Celecoxib (Cox-2 inhibitor)
- Corticosteroids (if not contraindicated by infection)
Neuropathic Pain

**Diagnosis**
- Clinical setting
  - Diabetes
  - MS
  - HIV
  - Spine surgery
- Distribution
  - Stocking/glove
  - Peripheral nerve
  - Nerve root/dermatome
- Quality & timing
  - Burning or shooting
  - Worse at night
- Physical findings
  - Allodynia
  - Cooler temps
  - Neurological deficit

**Drug Management**
- Anticonvulsants
  - Gabapentin
  - Pregabalin
  - Lamotrigine
  - Topiramiate
- Antidepressants
  - TCAs
  - SNRIs
- Local anesthetics
- Capsaicin
Bone Pain

**Diagnosis**

- Clinical setting
  - Cancer
  - Compression fracture
  - Sickle cell
  - Osteoporosis
  - Other trauma/fracture

- Distribution
  - Limb
  - Spine
  - Rib
  - Hip

- Quality & timing
  - Incident pain

- Physical findings
  - Tenderness

**Drug Management**

- NSAIDs
- Corticosteroids
- Bisphosphonates
- Salmon Calcitonin
Muscular Pain

**Diagnosis**
- Clinical setting
  - Muscular injury
- Distribution
  - Muscle group
- Quality & timing
  - Aggravated by certain movement or position
  - Better at rest
  - Pulling, ripping, aching, spasm, cramping
- Physical findings
  - Limited ROM
  - Trigger points
  - Muscle tightness
  - Taut bands or knots

**Drug Management**
- Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril)
- Orphenadrine (Norflex)
- Methocarbamol (Robaxin)
- Carisoprodol (Soma)
- Diazepam (Valium)
Psychogenic Pain

**Diagnosis**
- Clinical setting
  - High stress
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
- Distribution
  - Widespread
  - Non-anatomical
- Quality & timing
  - Extreme and dramatic descriptors
- Physical findings
  - Anxious
  - Histrionic
  - Normal physical exam

**Drug Management**
- Antidepressants
  - SSRI
  - SNRI
  - Bupropion (Wellbutrin)
  - Mirtazepine (Remeron)
- Anxiolytics
  - Benzodiazepine
  - Buspirone (BuSpar)
  - SSRI
- Atypical antipsychotics
  - Quietapine (Seroquel)
  - Respiradone (Zyprexa)
Topical Analgesics

- Lidocaine (Lidoderm) patches, lidocaine gels
- Topical diclofenac 1% gel
- Topical diclofenac 1.3% patch apply 1 patch to pain site q 12 hrs
- Ketoprofen 10% in PLO gel TID (Fairview compounded)
- Gabapentin 8% in PLO gel TID (Fairview compounded)
- Morphine 0.1% (weight to weight) in Intrasite gel. Used in open wounds (Fairview compounded)
- Capsaicin 0.025%, 0.075% desensitizes cutaneous nociceptive nerve endings: Must be used daily for several weeks for effectiveness.
Non-Pharmacological Treatments
Non-Pharmacologic Treatments

1. Movement-based
2. Stimulation-based
3. Mechanical/manipulative
4. Meditative/mindful
5. Nutriceutical
6. Energy-based
7. Spiritual

- Tai Chi
- Walking
- Aquatic exercise
- Acupuncture
- TENS
- Heat and ice
- Chiropractic
- Osteopathic
- Cranio-Sacral manipulation
- Relaxation
- Guided imagery
- Mindfulness-based stress reduction
- Supplements
- Vitamins
- Minerals
- Healing touch
- Acupuncture
- Vital energy
- Prayer
- Calling on higher power
- Aromatherapy?
Regional Analgesia

- Peripheral Nerve Blocks
- Sympathetic Blocks
- Epidural/Intrathecal Analgesia
Sympathetic Blocks

- Autonomic (sympathetic) blockade to treat ischemic pain and sympathetically maintained neuropathic pain. They also are used to manage pain from disease of internal organs.
- Benefits include decrease in opioid requirements and interrupting the pain cycle
  - Stellate ganglion block for face, upper extremity, chest wall at level C6-C7
  - Celiac plexus block: malignancy of liver, pancreas or upper GI
  - Hypogastric block is used for lower abdominal and pelvic pain.
  - Ganglion impar block for perineum, rectum and genitalia
Epidural Block

- Corticosteroid administration to the epidural space
- Indicated for radicular pain in the neck or back
- Gives intermediate term relief (weeks to months)
- Facilitates rehabilitation
Paravertebral Blocks

• Indicated for postoperative pain
• Catheter retained for <7 d
• Local anesthetic tracks up and down 1-2 dermatomes
What do you say to your patient?

• Your pain is caused by…
• Your pain is amplified by…
• Opioids do not address the cause or the amplifying factors
• Opioids have never been shown to increase function
• Opioids may actually increase pain and pain sensitivity
• Continue opioids and… *your balls will shrink to the size of raisins*
How To Say No

• Opioids aren’t indicated for your condition
• There are other txs that are more effective
• We don’t prescribe opioids for chronic pain when patients are using illicit drugs (even Marijuana and even for medicinal purposes)
• Your past experiences when using opioids (OD, multiple lost Rxs, poor function, frequent ER visits, etc) puts you at too high a risk if we go back to that type of treatment
How to Say No: What NOT to Say

- I just don’t prescribe narcotics
- That is not my area
- I am just not comfortable with that
- I don’t treat chronic pain
- Well, I’ll give you enough to get to your pain clinic appointment. Then it will be up to them
Case Vignettes

• A pt has burning pain down the posterior leg to the calf after lumbar surgery. How would you classify it?

• A 71 yr old man is admitted to hospital with a CVA. He has a long hx of chronic low back pain and DDD. How do you treat the low back pain in the hospital?

• A pt calls you on the phone because their chronic neck pain has been worse after he helped his sister move. He has been on SR morphine for over a year at the same dose, and is asking for a boost in the dose. What is your response

• Pt with chronic low back pain is asking for a strong narcotic to manage the pain so he can keep working

• A diabetic has burning foot pain what medication would be appropriate
Case Vignettes

• Neck pain is aching 2 years after a rear-end collision. It hurts with flexion of the neck. Pressure over the trapezius causes referred pain into the occipital area. What is the physiological type of pain?

• The above patient has a newborn. Pain is worse when she carries the infant. What do you call that component of the pain?

• True or False: It is reasonable to try to get the chronic pain patient to a pain level that is < 4/10

• How would you address the neck pain
  – Pharmacologically
  – Non-pharmacologically