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UPDATES Weblog from Pain-Topics.org Dispels Common Myths of Pain Care

News/Research UPDATES take a hard look at soft evidence behind many of today's pain management practices and beliefs. The goal of this project from Pain Treatment Topics is to help healthcare providers and the public to develop an educated skepticism.

Glenview, IL; September 2009 – It is now widely accepted that physical pain of all types has reached epidemic proportions. Despite the fact that research and information in the pain management field is mushrooming, more than 75-million Americans still suffer from pain disorders of varying intensity and duration.

“Healthcare providers and the public are not skeptical enough about what they read in the medical literature and news media,” says Stewart B. Leavitt, MA, PhD, Executive Director of *Pain Treatment Topics* and the associated Pain-Topics.org website. “Inferior research studies and misleading reporting have fostered many wrong, or at least unreliable, solutions for treating pain conditions, especially chronic pain. Put simply, the pain management field is riddled with medical myths and it’s time for a hard look at the soft evidence behind many common practices and beliefs.”



To counteract the abundance of misinformation about pain and its treatment, Leavitt and colleagues recently launched their “**Pain-Topics News/Research UPDATES**” weblog --- to view, visit *** <http://Updates.Pain-Topics.org> *** --- providing evidence-based perspectives on current research and other issues of concern. The format also allows for comments from readers, expressing their opinions and insights. Examples of UPDATES postings include:

- ↔ **Opioid Deaths – the Enemy is Us?** -- Discusses what can go wrong with opioid analgesics when they are inappropriately prescribed and improperly used. Common communication failures by healthcare professionals are examined, and these may lead to misguided efforts by the FDA to enforce safer use of these products.

- <> **Acetaminophen Debacle; Much Ado About Very Little** -- An FDA panel has recommended placing severe restrictions on the distribution of acetaminophen-containing products. However, according to one analysis, 99.86% of the time such products are used safely. What actually is needed is better consumer education, not more regulation.
- <> **Urine Drug Testing (UDT) Study Misinterprets Opioid Analgesic Misuse** -- A large study of UDT results claiming that three-fourths of patients prescribed opioids for chronic pain are noncompliant with the therapy raises more questions than it answers. Inadvertently, the study also reveals significant limitations and hazards of relying on UDT as a guide for patient care.
- <> **Depression Often Accounts for Medically Unexplained Pain** -- Patients with depression more frequently and severely experience pain symptoms that cannot be medically attributed to organic disease, according to new research. Such disorders are common but often misdiagnosed by healthcare providers; therefore, proper pain care requires attending to patients' mental health issues.
- <> **Tension Myositis Syndrome (TMS) & Chronic Pain Myths** – The clinical validity of TMS, which attributes nonspecific chronic pain to unresolved emotional distress, needs careful examination. If it is more myth than reality there are some potential risks of accepting TMS as a clinical diagnosis in patients with pain.

“By their nature, UPDATES postings are brief and concise, so we often provide links to further evidence or information providing background support,” Leavitt concludes. “Our goal is to help our audience become more critical evaluators of pain research, more discriminating in their acceptance of scientific evidence and, ultimately, better pain management providers and consumers.”

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Pain Treatment Topics and the associated website (<http://Pain-Topics.org>) provide open and free access to noncommercial, evidence-based clinical news, information, research, and education on the causes and effective treatment of the many types of pain conditions. The project is independently produced and supported in part by a medical education grant from Purdue Pharma L.P., Stamford, Connecticut, a leading manufacturer of opioid analgesic products.

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