

Effective pain management crucial to older adults' well-being

April 11 2011

Improved management of chronic pain can significantly reduce disability in older adults, according to the latest issue of the [WHAT'S HOT](#) newsletter from The Gerontological Society of America (GSA).

Based largely on presentation highlights from GSA's 63rd Annual Scientific Meeting in November 2010, the current WHAT'S HOT examines the impact of pain in older adults, strategies for managing pain and preserving function, and methods to improve the assessment and management of pain for residents in long-term care facilities, including those who have dementia. Support for this publication was provided by McNeil Consumer Healthcare.

"Under-treatment of chronic pain in older adults is common, contributing to unnecessary suffering," said Deborah Dillon McDonald, RN, PhD, of the University of Connecticut School of Nursing, who served as an advisor for the issue. "Older adults and practitioners need to work together to find optimal multi-modal [pain management](#) plans that reduce pain and avoid [adverse events](#)."

The newsletter points out that pain is a signal that something is wrong, and that reports of pain should not be dismissed simply because the patient is older. Furthermore, the issue demonstrates that chronic musculoskeletal pain is associated with numerous problems such as increased disability and sleep difficulty in older people. The research and national initiatives presented therein underscore the importance of good pain management in [older adults](#) and explore strategies for

optimizing patient well-being.

Among the most successful methods for pain treatment are physical activity, pain protocol interventions, and medication use. Additional topics raised in the newsletter focus on ongoing activities to support safe selection and use of analgesics (including appropriate acetaminophen dosage), which is important to communicate to multiple stakeholders, including patients, caregivers, [health care providers](#), policymakers, and researchers.

Provided by The Gerontological Society of America

Citation: Effective pain management crucial to older adults' well-being (2011, April 11) retrieved 20 March 2024 from

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