

New GSA resources lay foundation for relieving seniors' pain

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The pain suffered by older adults is the shared focus of the two newest entries in [The Gerontological Society of America's](#) (GSA) [From Publication to Practice](#) series. Together they address both pain management and new labeling changes for one of the most popular pain medications, acetaminophen. Both issues aim to provide readers with information on how new advances in pain prevention, treatment, and management may improve care and quality of life for older adults. The From Publication to Practice series was launched last year to promote the translation of research into meaningful health outcomes.

"Taken together, these two new resources will enable the gerontological community to identify opportunities to improve [pain](#) management services," said Cathy Alessi, MD, the 2011 chair of GSA's Health Sciences Section. "Research indicates that [severe pain](#) in older adults leads to a decreased quality of life, including both satisfaction with life and health-related quality of life."

One of the installments, "An Interdisciplinary Look at Advancing Pain Care, Education, and Research: Responding to the IOM's Call to Action To Improve [Pain Management](#)," was supported by an educational grant from Purdue Pharma, L.P. While addressing shortfalls in assessment and treatment for [older adults](#) with pain, this publication aims to inform [health care providers](#), researchers, policy makers, educators, caregivers, and patients about a recent Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, "Relieving Pain in America: A Blueprint for Transforming Prevention, Care, Education, and Research."

While pain affects approximately one-third of Americans — and exacts a huge toll from society in terms of morbidity, mortality, disability, demands on the health care system, and economic burden — it remains widely undertreated. GSA's new publication also provides an overview of needs for care, education, and research, and lays out a blueprint for transforming pain care.

The other new issue, "An Interdisciplinary Look at Labeling Changes for Acetaminophen and the Implications for Patient Care," was supported by McNeil Consumer Healthcare. It was produced in response to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's recent modifications to the recommended daily dosage of acetaminophen. The purpose of these changes is to make patients aware of the presence and amount of acetaminophen in single-ingredient and combination products — with the goal of preventing overdoses that can cause acute liver failure.

Acetaminophen is present in more than 600 over-the-counter and prescription products used by more than 50 million Americans each week. This commonly used medication is taken to treat conditions such as pain, fever, and the aches and pains associated with cold and flu. Acetaminophen — over-the-counter or prescription — is the most frequently prescribed agent for pain relief. This installment of From Publication to Practice provides essential information on the new labeling changes and describes the resulting implications for patient care, especially for older patients. It also presents important steps that clinicians and aging network professionals can take when educating patients.

Provided by The Gerontological Society of America

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