

# Urgent need to expand use of shingles vaccine and treat shingles-related pain

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Shingles, a reactivation of the herpes zoster (chickenpox) virus affects nearly 1 in 3 Americans. About 1 million cases are diagnosed each year, with some patients suffering excruciating pain and itching due to post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN), a complication of the viral infection that can last for years despite treatment. The latest information on shingles and PHN, including a new, improved vaccine to prevent shingles and alternative therapies to control symptoms, are discussed in a special focus section in *Population Health Management*, a peer-reviewed journal from Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers.

The issue features an interview with Julie Gerberding, MD, MPH, president of the vaccines unit of Merck (MRK), the company that manufactures the [shingles](#) vaccine, and former director of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). It also includes a Roundtable discussion featuring a panel comprised of some of the world's leading experts on PHN including Rafael Harpaz, MD, from the Centers for Disease Control; an article on the biology underlying reactivation of the zoster virus; and a study focused on the role that nutrition may have in shingles therapy. Barbara Yawn, MD, MSc, Director of Research, Olmsted Medical Center and Adjunct Professor, Department of Family and Community Health, University of Minnesota, Rochester, MN, is the guest editor of the special section.

"Shingles can be a devastating condition, especially for [older adults](#) who have a 30% chance of continuing to have the often debilitating pain of PHN," says Guest Editor Dr. Yawn. "This is a condition that deserves

continuing attention from the public, physicians, and nurses, as well as researchers."

"This issue of [Population Health Management](#) is especially valuable because it captures the extensive research taking place on shingles and PHN, in addition to the treatment options that have been shown to reduce dramatically the number of shingles cases," says Editor-in-Chief David B. Nash, MD, MBA, Dean and Dr. Raymond C. and Doris N. Grandon Professor, Jefferson School of [Population Health](#), Philadelphia, PA.

**More information:** The articles in this special section are available free on the Population Health Management website at [www.liebertpub.com/pop](http://www.liebertpub.com/pop).

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