

# Provider demographics affect pain treatment decisions

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(HealthDay)—Pain management treatment decisions may be impacted by a health care provider's demographic characteristics, according to a study published in the January issue of *Pain Medicine*.

Emily J. Bartley, Ph.D., from the University of Florida in Gainesville, and colleagues evaluated [health care provider](#) characteristics among 154 practitioners (77 physicians, 77 dentists) who viewed video vignettes of virtual human (VH) patients whose sex, race, and age varied. VH patients' [pain intensity](#) and unpleasantness were rated by practitioners, who also reported their willingness to prescribe non-opioid and opioid analgesics for each patient.

The researchers found that practitioner sex, race, age, and duration of

experience were all significantly associated with pain management decisions. Furthermore, the effect of these characteristics differed across VH patient sex, race, and age categories.

"Future research is warranted to determine whether findings replicate in other health care disciplines and medical conditions, and identify other practitioner characteristics (e.g., culture) that may affect pain management decisions," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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