

Use Of Opioids For Benign Back Pain

The role of opioids in the treatment of chronic pain has been written about since as early as 2400 BC and has become increasingly controversial over the past decade.

A recent Back Letter article titled "Opioids Disabling for Workers?" cites two studies which advise caution in the use of opioids for back pain.

A recent retrospective cohort study from the state of Washington looked at opioid use and subsequent long-term disability among 1843 workers with lost time claims for low back pain. Gary Franklin MD found that a third of the workers received a prescription for opioids within six weeks of their first medical visit and half received an opioid at their first consultation.

After adjustment for pain function and injury severity and other baseline covariates, a receipt of more than one opioid prescription was significantly associated with work disability at one year.

The Back Letter reports that a second retrospective cohort study of 8443 workers compensation claimants arrived at similar conclusions. After control for age, gender, job tenure and injury severity, the findings indicated that receipt of higher amounts of morphine equivalent medications in early treatment was significantly associated with adverse outcomes, including higher medical costs and prolonged disability, higher risk for surgery and continued use of opioids. (The Back Letter Volume 23, No. 2, 2008)

Pauline Rist

Modifiable Risk Factors For Chronic Low Back Pain: A Review

Wai and colleagues (2007) investigated the risk factors that are often associated with chronic low back pain (CLBP). In particular they looked at modifiable lifestyle risk factors

The authors discussed the need to promote positive health outcomes for the prevention and treatment of CLBP.

They defined the modifiable lifestyle risk factors for CLBP as improving physical activity levels, smoking cessation and weight loss.

In relation to CLBP and improving physical activity levels, Wai and colleagues (2007) agreed that the relationship was complex. They concluded that clinicians treating CLBP and work places with employees that suffer from CLBP need to incorporate a graduated return to work program in conjunction with a gradually increasing activity or exercise program to ensure that the needs of the worker or the individual are met.

The authors note that smoking and its relationship to CLBP has not yet been thoroughly investigated. It has been suggested however that repetitive coughing by smokers can lead to the microtrauma of the discs. Smoking also reduces blood flow and hence early degeneration can occur in the discs and vertebral bodies. It is therefore suggested given a possible causative link, that those who smoke and suffer from CLBP be offered assistance with smoking cessation.

A link between obesity and LBP has been made on several occasions. An increase in weight is thought to increase the pressure or load-bearing placed on the spine and consequently alter biomechanics which could lead to excessive wear and early degeneration (Wai et.al, 2007). They did conclude however that there is no evidence as to the efficacy of non-operative weight loss as an intervention for CLBP.

Wai and colleagues (2007) suggested that further research needs to be done. They concluded health practitioners should be encouraged to educate their clients who suffer from CLBP on these modifiable lifestyle factors in order to assist in the management of their back pain and improve their general way of life.

Beth Sheehan

1. Wai, E.K., Rodriguez, S., Dagenais, S., & Hall, H. (2008). Evidence-informed management of chronic low back pain with physical activity, smoking cessation, and weight loss. *The Spine Journal*, 8:195-202.

New Service

GTR is now offering individual Physical Conditioning Programs for workers. This service is run by an Exercise Physiologist which involves an initial consultation, set-up and monitoring of the program. The service is run from the Centenary Pool utilizing the gym and pool facilities.

HOW TO REFER

Please call Cathy Thomas on (07) 3831 5538 or email cathy@gregorytcerehab.com.au



Don't Forget
Date for your Diary

Pinot by the
Pool
Wednesday
4 June 2008 at
6pm

Wine Tasting
hosted by Bill Ryan
with

Guest Speaker
Dr Simon
Gatehouse

Lumbar Spinal
Fractures in the
Working Population

For details please call:
Cathy Thomas 38315538

Conference Calendar

Survival To Revival – Energising Rehabilitation
Ridges Lakeside Hotel, London Circuit, Canberra
10th to 12th September, 2008

2008 National Conference Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors (ASORC)
Ph. 02 6251 0675 Fax. 02 6251 0672
email alyssa@consec.com.au
Website www.consec.com.au

TRACsa Conference 2008 The Better choices Better Health conference
"Improving Compensation Outcomes"
November 23rd to 26th / 2008
Adelaide Convention Centre
<http://www.alloccasionsgroup.com/BetterChoicesBetterHealth>

IASP 12th World Congress on Pain
August 17th to 22nd / 2008
Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre, Glasgow, Scotland, UK
Website www.isap-pain.org

Communication in Anaesthesia
October 11th to 14th 2008
Wellington Convention Centre
Website www.asanzsa2008.org.nz

The Australian Pain Society 29th Annual Scientific Meeting
Sunday 5th April to Wednesday 8th April, 2009

Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre The Pain continuum: Making Pain History
Celebrating 30th Anniversary of the Australian Pain Society
Website www.apsoc.org.au

Research Update

A New Episode of Low Back Pain: Who Relies on Bed Rest?
Verbunt, JA; Sieben, J; Vlaeyen, JW; Portegijs, P; AndrewKnotnerus, J
European Journal of Pain (ISSN: 1090-3801); Volume 12, No.4, pp. 508-516; 2008 Elsevier Science B.V., Amsterdam

The Impact of Specialist Care for Low Back Pain on Health Service Utilization in Primary Care Patients: A Prospective Cohort Study
Chenot, JF; Leonhardt, C; Keller, S; Scherer, M; DonnerBanzhoff, N; Pflingsten, M; Basler, HD; Baum, E; Kochen, MM; Becker, A.
European Journal of Pain (ISSN: 1090-3801); Volume 12, No. 3, pp. 275-283; 2008 Elsevier Science B.V., Amsterdam

A Double Blind Randomised Controlled Clinical Trial on the Effect of Transcutaneous Spinal Electroanalgesia (TSE) on Low Back Pain
Thompson, JW; Bower, S; Tyrer, SP
European Journal of Pain (ISSN: 1090-3801); Volume 12, No. 3, pp. 371-377; 2008 Elsevier Science B.V., Amsterdam

Chronic Pain and Opiates: A Call for Moderation
Harden, RN
Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ISSN: 0003-9993); Volume 89, No. 3, pp. S72-S76; 2008 Elsevier Science B.V., Amsterdam

Interventions in Chronic Pain Management. 3. Evaluation and Management of Lumbar Pain Syndromes
Saulino, MF; Kornbluth, ID; Overton, EA; Holding, MY; Freedman, MK
Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ISSN: 0003-9993); Volume 89, No. 3, pp. S47-S50; 2008 Elsevier Science B.V., Amsterdam

Self-Report Measures Best Explain Changes in Disability Compared With Physical Measures After Exercise Rehabilitation for Chronic Low Back Pain
Marshall, P; Murphy, B
Spine (ISSN: 0362-2436); Volume 33, No. 3, pp. 326-338; 2008 J B Lippincott Co.

Psychological Predictors of Substantial Pain Reduction After Minimally Invasive Radiofrequency and Injection Treatments for Chronic Low Back Pain
Van Wijk, Roelof M. A. W.; Geurts, Jos W. M.; Lousberg, Richel; Wynne, Herman J.; Hammink, Edwin; Knape, Johannes T.A.; Groen, Gerbrand J.
Pain Medicine (ISSN: 1526-2375); Volume 9, No. 2, pp. 212-221 (10); March 2008 Blackwell Publishing Inc

Patient Expectations as Predictors of Outcome in Patients with Acute Low Back Pain
Myers, SS; Phillips, RS; Davis, RB; cherkin, DC; Legedza, A; Kaptchuk, TJ; Hrbek, A; Buring, JE; Post, D; Connelly, MT
Journal of General Internal Medicine (ISSN: 0884-8734); Volume 23, No. 2, pp. 148-153; 2008 Springer Science & Business Media.

Future Newsletters / Invitations will be available for distribution by email.

If you would like this to happen please email cathy@gregorytcerehab.com.au

Please contact us if you require more information about any of the topics covered in this edition.

Once again, we would like to provide you with an opportunity to contribute articles for publication, or to advise us of any information you would like us to disseminate to others interested in the treatment of spinal pain.

SUITE 4 CENTENARY POOLSIDE
400 GREGORY TERRACE
SPRING HILL Q 4000

Phone:
07 3831 5538

Fax:
07 3831 5527

Web Site:
www.gregorytcerehab.com.au