

Managing pain in patients with addiction

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The Office of National Drug Control Policy recently released the Obama Administration's action plan to address the national prescription drug abuse epidemic and announced new federal requirements aimed at educating the medical community about proper prescribing practices. The 2011-2012 College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP) Recertification Committee recognized a need to provide evidence-based education to pharmacists and other health care providers to encourage our professions to be agents of change in providing solutions to the prescription drug abuse epidemic.

The Recertification Committee is developing a special education session to be presented at the 2011 American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists (ASHP) Mid-Year Clinical Meeting. *Taking the "Ouch" out of Pain Management in Patients with Addiction* will be presented on Monday, December 5 from 2-4 p.m. in New Orleans, Louisiana. Speakers for the 2-hour presentation are **Merrill Norton, Pharm.D., NCAC II, CCS, CCDP-D** and **S. Hughes Melton, M.D., FAAFP**.

Dr. Norton serves as Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy and has a wealth of experience in working with patients and health care providers with addiction. He has published in the areas of medications for alcohol and drug dependence, impaired health care providers, prescription drug abuse and the pharmacology of psychoactive chemical abuse. An interview in this month's *Mental Health Clinician* further details Dr. Norton's background and clinical practice.

Dr. Melton is a family physician at C-Health, PC in Lebanon, VA. He was awarded the 2010 American Academy of Family Physicians Physician of the Year Award. His platform focused on the stigma associated with addiction and the need for health care providers to be educated about universal precautions when prescribing controlled substances in patients with chronic pain. In his practice, he treats patients with opiate dependence in an outpatient buprenorphine treatment

program. He also treats patients with chronic pain diagnoses in a group setting.

During the presentation, Drs. Norton and Melton will discuss appropriate risk assessment strategies (i.e., Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies [REMS], Universal Precautions) for the abuse, misuse, and diversion of opioid therapies used in the management of chronic pain. In addition, they will help participants select screening instruments to identify patients at risk for opioid dependence and/or abuse, and evaluate abuse-deterrent technologies associated with opioid therapy. The presentation will evaluate evidence-based literature for patient-related factors associated with risk of relapse if opioid medications are used to treat pain in patients with a history of addiction. The speakers will contrast options for pharmacotherapy (e.g., nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs [NSAIDs], opioid therapies, adjunctive agents) for chronic pain in patients at risk for or with a history of addiction. At the conclusion of the programming, the participants should be able to formulate a response to challenges encountered in the management of chronic pain in patients at risk for, or with a history of, addiction.

If you are unable to attend the programming at the ASHP Mid-Year meeting, plan to attend an encore presentation at the 2012 CPNP Annual Meeting in Tampa, Florida. The presentation will be part of 5 hours of live programming offered for Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacist (BCPP) recertification. The program will also be available online as a distance education program.

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