

# Family Medicine Clerkship Plain Language Summary Template

**Title:** Ketamine may help with pain management in chronic pain conditions

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## **Plain Language Summary:**

Many people have pain every day. The amount of people in the world with pain is growing. There are many different types of pain. Some people have pain in their backs. Some people have pain due to sickness. Some people have pain from their minds. Some people have pain due to living a long life. Some people have pain that doctors do not understand.

There are many ways to treat pain. These include medicines, exercise, and talking to special doctors. However, these treatments do not always stop the pain. Some people have pain despite many treatments. Unfortunately, some people also become addicted to their medicines. These medicines are dangerous and can cause death. It scares doctors when people take large amounts of these medicines. Sadly, sometimes there are no better answers than the bad medicines.

Doctors would like new ways to treat pain. One new way to treat pain is with a sleepy medicine, called ketamine. This medicine helps people go to sleep before surgery. This medicine is also able to stop the pain signals within the brain. When it is used for pain, ketamine is given in smaller amounts. People do not go to sleep, but they do feel less pain. Many studies have researched this medicine. These studies agree that pain can be cut in half with this medicine. However, this medicine works best when it is used with other medicines. This medicine does not stop all the pain by itself.

Some new studies show that ketamine can decrease pain for a long period of time. To do this, a lot of it is given in a short period of time. When ketamine is given this way, people can have less pain for many weeks. It does this by acting in a unique way in the brain. This medicine is special because other pain medicines do not do this.

There is lots of interest to use this new medicine to treat pain. But, it is not easy to give to people at the moment. It is also expensive. Before it can be used in many people, a new way to give it needs to be created. This new way needs to be easier and cheaper. We also need a better understanding of its side effects. Some people see things when they take the medicine. Doctors need to figure out a safe amount of the medicine to give to prevent the side effects.

## **Additional Resources:**

- Pain Management Health Center from WebMD
  - <http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/guide/understanding-pain-management-chronic-pain>
- Ketamine for Chronic Pain from WebMDvideo
  - <http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/video/ketamine-chronic-pain>

- The Role of Ketamine in Pain Management
  - <http://www.ketamine.com/pain.html>

**Key Words:**

Chronic pain

Ketamine

NMDA receptor antagonist

Analgesia

Opioid addiction

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