

Family Medicine Clerkship Plain Language Summary

Title: Chronic Pain: Will an opioid treatment agreement and urine drug testing make managing your pain safer?

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Plain Language Summary:

Chronic pain can have many different causes. Doctors place pain from cancer into a different type than from other causes. This information will refer to pain that is not caused by cancer which is lasting longer than three months. This type of pain can be in many different areas of the body. One common area is the lower portion of the back. When the pain began your doctor may have started you on prescription pain medications. This is because this form of medicine works well for acute pain.

One form of pain medications is opioids. These are also known as narcotics. Narcotics are very powerful medications. They can become addicting. A person may need more narcotics over time to treat their pain. This is due to the body building a tolerance to the medication. If this happens a patient can be at risk for overdose from the narcotics. An overdose can lead to slowing down a person's breathing. It can even lead to death.



These medications can also cause a person to feel overly happy or a person can have weird thoughts or visions. People can misuse them for this type of experience instead of treating pain. Other people may try to buy or steal these medications from patients to use in this manner. Overall these are examples of opioid misuse. Doctors are cautious to prescribe narcotics for chronic pain due to all of these reasons. Doctors use several methods to try to keep patients safe from these bad outcomes. The goal of treatment is also to minimize or stop using these dangerous medications. Doctors will use other methods to control the pain. The main goal is to maintain a person's functional ability.

One safety method is the use of opioid treatment agreements. These are often known to patients as pain contracts. Another method is urine drug testing. Scientists are studying these methods to find out if they reduce opioid misuse. At this time information is limited on the results from the use of pain contracts and urine drug testing. Several studies have shown very different results with the use of these methods. Some have reduced the bad outcomes and opioid misuse only a small amount. Others have decreased how often this happens by fifty percent. It is not known which items are needed in pain contracts to get the better results. Most contracts will require patients



PAIN MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES AND CONTRACT

Name _____ DOB _____

Goals for Taking Opioid Medications: _____

I, _____, understand that compliance with the following guidelines is important to the continuation of pain treatment by _____.

1. I will take medications at the dose and frequency prescribed. No other pain medications are to be taken unless discussed first with _____.
2. I will comply with my scheduled appointments. No over-the-counter _____.
3. No pain medication will be refilled by phone. I understand that pain medication prescriptions will only be refilled at the scheduled clinic appointments.
4. I will not request controlled substances or any other pain medicine from prescribers other than _____.
5. I will consent to random drug testing.
6. I will protect my prescribed medications. No lost or stolen medications will be replaced.
7. I will tell all my physicians that I am receiving pain treatment through and/or from _____.
8. I agree to participate in psychiatric, neuropsychology, and substance abuse assessments.
9. This agreement will be placed in my medical record.
10. I understand that if I have any questions or concerns regarding my pain treatment that I will call my primary care provider at _____.

I have read and understood the above guidelines.

Patient _____ Date _____ Physician _____ Date _____

to receive their pain medications from only one doctor and one pharmacy. This allows a patient to be safer. Getting medications from many sources places a patient in danger since the amount a patient uses increases too quickly. Further research needs to be done to find out the best form of pain contract and use of urine drug testing to keep patients safe. Patients should not think these methods are used because doctors do not want to help their pain. Patients should know they are used to keep them safe. Doctors use pain contracts and urine drug testing as just one method in a complex plan. Doctors want to adequately treat pain while maintaining safety. Current research shows these methods may slightly improve safety and decrease misuse of narcotic medications.

Additional Resources:

Where can I find further information?

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/common/pain/disorders/551.html>

<http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/guide/understanding-pain-management-chronic-pain>

I would like specialized care in a center focused on chronic pain. Where can I find help?

MAPS Clinic

<http://www.painphysicians.com/>

Phone: 1-800-775-PAIN

Mayo Clinic Pain Rehabilitation Center

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/pain-rehabilitation-center-rst/>

Phone: 507-255-5921

Key Words:

Chronic Non-Cancer Pain

Opioid Treatment Agreements

Opioid Misuse

Pain Contracts

Urine Drug Testing

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