

Treating Chronic Nonmalignant Pain

John Whitham, Jerry Kizerian. Physicians' Attitudes toward the Use of Opioids in the Management of Chronic Nonmalignant Pain. Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Annual Spring Conference, Denver CO, May 2009.

Background: Physicians' negative attitudes toward use of opioid medication to treat chronic pain can inhibit adequate management of pain.

Aims & Methods: This survey examined 347 family medicine residents' and faculty physicians' clinical and training experiences with chronic pain, barriers to prescribing opioids for pain, and attitudes toward opioid use.

Results: RRNeT family physicians commonly treated osteoarthritis, peripheral neuropathy, and tension headaches. Their attitudes toward opioid use were conservative, believing that opioids should play a major role in treating only two conditions: sickle cell pain and cancer pain. The strongest barriers to use were addiction-related issues. In multivariate analysis, physicians with more clinical experience and training about pain management showed a greater willingness to use opioids; however those attitudes were tempered by barriers related to addiction.