Preface

Chronic Pain: Opportunities Amid Adversity

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Editor

Chronic pain, experienced by patients across the lifespan, is a common global health problem. The management of chronic noncancer pain remains a discomfort among clinicians, in part, due to limited scientific understanding of the pathophysiology as well as difficulty accessing the comprehensive, multidisciplinary programs and services that are cited as best practice. In addition, the experience of how best to provide care to a person and population that experiences significant morbidity and effects quality of life amid limited evidence, limited effective treatments, treatment guidelines codified into law that stipulates how one must practice can result in vicarious trauma for the treatment community.

This experience, however, in no way can compare with that of the individual sitting in the office in front of us confronted with chronic pain. In many ways, inequities and stigma regarding chronic pain have impacted this population and understandably created trust issues with patients and clinicians. Understanding these past challenges as well as confronting the reality of the difficulty with which to navigate care for patients experiencing chronic pain, primary care physicians have a unique role to play to deliver compassionate, patient-centered care even in the face of limited scientific understanding and treatment modalities.

Within this issue, you will find a wide breadth of topics focused on chronic pain, including evaluation, management, ethical and sociologic perspectives, systems-based practice, and the impacts of policy and public health. While not intended to be comprehensive, the authors shed light on core principles that can assist the primary care community in broadening perspectives on the biologic, psychologic, and social components that impact the health of individuals and populations experiencing chronic pain. Deeper discussions and partnerships between clinicians and patients, particularly in the advocacy realm, are certainly needed to make the essential policy changes to overcome the adversity. But, if we work together, we will go farther.
It was an absolute pleasure working with an outstanding group of authors who contributed to this issue of *Primary Care: Clinics in Office Practice*. As we embarked on this journey, each of us learned more in the process, and our sincere hope is that this issue will provide you with similar educational advancement to provide quality care to our populations.

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