Identifying Appropriate Pain Management Options for Patients With Osteoarthritis

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It is estimated that

27 million

Americans are living with osteoarthritis (OA).

Acetaminophen and oral nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are among the pharmacologic therapies recommended for initial management of pain associated with OA.

A stepwise approach helps ensure that patients receive the appropriate analgesic for their OA pain.

A Stepwise Approach to the Management of Pain Associated With OA

1. Assess Patient Profile
   - Identify current medications (including over-the-counter medications, herbals, and supplements) and coexisting medical conditions.

2. Develop Pain Management Plan
   - Educate patients on pain management options.
   - Incorporate nonpharmacologic measures, such as physical therapy, assistive devices (eg, canes, walkers), or braces, as appropriate.

3. Introduce Nonopioid Pharmacologic Agents
   - Consider options such as acetaminophen or NSAIDs.
   - The maximum dose of acetaminophen that a healthcare provider (HCP) can recommend for adults is 4000 mg/24 hours.
   - It is recommended that NSAIDs be given at the lowest effective dose for the shortest period of time.

4. Assess Opioid Options for Appropriate Patients
   - Start with weak opioids before escalating to stronger opioid options.
   - Consider use of acetaminophen or other over-the-counter analgesics to help manage breakthrough pain.

5. Evaluate for Specialty Referral
   - Consider referral to an orthopedic specialist or rheumatologist for further treatment options, such as surgery.

References:
7. GetReliefResponsibly.com has more information for HCPs and patients. 

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