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).[1]

Acetaminophen and oral nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are among the pharmacologic therapies recommended for initial management of pain associated with OA.[2,3]

41% of people with OA

use opioids to manage pain associated with OA.[4]

The Osteoarthritis Research Society International recommends that weak opioids be considered where other pharmacological agents have been ineffective or are contraindicated.[3]

A stepwise approach helps ensure that patients receive the appropriate analgesic for their OA pain.[5,6]

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.[2]

3 Introduce Nonopioid Pharmacologic Agents

- Consider options such as acetaminophen or NSAIDs.[2]
  - Utilize information obtained in Step 1 to help identify an appropriate choice.

✓ 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.[7]

4 Assess Opioid Options for Appropriate Patients

- Start with weak opioids before escalating to stronger opioid options.[5,6]
- Consider use of acetaminophen or other over-the-counter analgesics to help manage breakthrough pain.[8]

5 Evaluate for Specialty Referral

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

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