

PorcuPAIN

Don't Get Stuck With Pain



Pain is a significant health problem that is often unrecognized or under treated with residents in long term care. Among the institutionalized elderly, up to 83% report at least one pain problem. Left untreated, pain can lead to substantial health and social problems, including: cognitive changes with impaired memory/thinking; behavioral problems; appetite changes (frequently decreased); mood disorders (depression, anxiety); disrupted sleep; increased fatigue; trouble breathing deeply and decreased walking/functioning, increasing the risk for falls. Pain can cause slower rehabilitation and it weakens the immune system, increasing risk for colds/flu. Pain can destroy relationships, creating more stress and difficulties with family and staff. Pain decreases a person's overall quality of life.

Pain is a complex process, it's not just the physical cause (sometimes this can't be determined), but also the person's prior pain history, different biological factors, psychological status and how people are interacting with them. Pain is unique to each person; you can't judge someone's pain.

The elderly as a group do not report pain, you have to ask. Pain is not a natural part of aging. Everyone deserves treatment, whatever age or functional status. There are many different types of pain management options. Pain responds best when treated early and promptly. Addiction is misunderstood and rarely occurs with this population. It's important for everyone working with residents to take a close look at your own beliefs, are they correct?

Further information about pain is available on <http://www.nationalpainfoundation.org>, <http://www.primaris.org/professionals/products.asp?SETTING=Nursing%20Home&TOPIC=Pain>, and <http://aspi.wisc.edu>

Speak up and be an advocate for good pain care!

1. Determine how pain monitoring is done in the home by sharing this newsletter and discussing methods with your nursing staff.
2. Encourage staff to report changes that might suggest a resident is having an issue with pain.
3. Discuss the level of difficulty CNAs experience in reporting residents' pain and help determine ways to make it easier and timely.
4. If you are not signed up for the *Advancing Excellence Campaign*, go to www.nhqualitycampaign.org to join. Already a member? Visit the website to update your goals and locate tools.

MoLANE Planning Committee Members:

- Missouri Pain Initiative
- Missouri Association of Homes for the Aging
- Missouri Health Care Association
- Missouri Coalition Celebrating Care Continuum Change
- Missouri Association of Nursing Home Administrators
- Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
- Missouri League for Nursing
- Missouri State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- Missouri State Board of Nursing Home Administrators
- National Association of Health Care Assistants
- Primaris, Missouri's Medicare Quality Improvement Organization
- Quality Improvement Program for Missouri (QIPMO)

Watch for more PAIN Tips!