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Pain Talk

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East Tennessee Opioid Conference

Pain Consultants of East Tennessee co-organized the East Tennessee Opioid Conference, which took place on Friday, March 23rd in Lenoir City.

Planning for the event began in September of 2017 after Dr. James Choo approached Summit Medical Group and the Metro Drug Coalition about the need to educate primary care physicians about pain medicine. Primary care physicians receive little to no training about pain medicine during their academic years and residency. "Family practice" prescribe more opioid medication than any other medically-related category.



More than 270 physicians, nurses, community leaders, and students attended the conference. Presenters included Dr. Choo who spoke about managing pain in primary care practices, Dr. Ted Jones who spoke about the psychology of pain, and Dr. Mark McGrail who spoke about the science of addiction.

Panel members included Jim Lancaster, MD of Cigna, Darinka Mileusnic-Polchan, MD, PhD, Chief Medical Examiner for Knox and Anderson Counties, David Rausch, Chief of the Knoxville Police Department, David R. Reagan, MD, PhD, CMO of the Tennessee Department of Health, and Karen Pershing, MPH, CPS II, Executive Director of the Metro Drug Coalition.

The conference was organized by Summit Medical Group, the Metro Drug Coalition, and Pain Consultants of East Tennessee and was sponsored by Cigna. Medical professionals also had the opportunity to continuing medical education (CME) credits made possible by Covenant Health.

Dr. Choo believes the event served an important purpose.

"Our primary care providers are on the front line when it comes to initial reporting of pain from patients," he said. "Our goal was to educate them about pain management within their practice so that they can make more informed decisions, know and understand the ever-changing laws, and ultimately better protect their patients. We hope the educational materials presented at the conference will continue to lead to a decrease in opioid abuse and addiction."

PCET OT: Taking Back Control - Part 1

by Niccole Rowe, COTA/L

Do you feel like chronic pain controls your life? People with chronic pain often feel that what they want to do takes a back-seat to their chronic pain. For individuals with chronic pain, how much activity they can do is determined by their pain level. When they are experiencing a pain flare, it feels like very little gets accomplished. At times activity can lead to increased pain, which means activities may not be completed.

But what if it could be different? Most of us want to feel like we are in control over our choices and what we want to get done for the day. Sometimes small changes can add up to a shift in daily choices that can bring back a feeling of being in the driver's seat. In occupational therapy at Pain Consultants of East Tennessee (PCET), we focus on empowering our patients by helping the patients gain knowledge and skills so they can self-manage their pain and be in the driver's seat when it comes to their lives.



Self-management is about being in charge of one's life and managing one's condition, instead of being managed by that condition. Self-management is recognized as an effective approach to managing chronic health conditions by "empowering patients to understand their conditions and take responsibility for their health".

You may already use some self-management tools such as propping yourself with pillows to get some relief during rest. Taking medication as prescribed can also be part of the self-management process, but it is important to have self-management tools outside of medication to improve your quality of life especially in the long term.

Self-management is also about working with your medical providers. Self-management doesn't mean going against medical advice or adjusting medications without medical advice. Self-management means that you ensure you understand the medical treatment that has been recommended, and what actions you can take to maintain your health.

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