FAST FACTS: Pain 101

Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage. There are two main categories of pain: Acute Pain and Persistent or Chronic Pain.

✓ **Acute Pain**
  - Has a distinct beginning
  - Usually has a known cause
  - Short lasting
  - Common causes are trauma or postsurgical pain

✓ **Persistent or Chronic Pain**
  - Does not resolve in the expected amount of time.
  - Often associated with damage to the body and psychological issues.
  - May occur without any past injury or trauma.
  - Can vary in character and intensity over time.
  - Chronic pain occurs at least half of the days for 6 months or more; after 6 months, it is called persistent pain.

✓ **Pain Assessment**
  - To determine the best course of treatment, your loved one’s health care provider will perform a complete evaluation to determine:
    - Underlying cause of pain.
    - Pain characteristics.
    - Impact of pain on physical, emotional, and social functioning and quality of life.
  - Your loved one’s report of pain is the most reliable evidence of intensity and impact on function.
  - Your loved one’s health care provider should assess for pain at each visit and use a standard pain scale.

✓ **Pain Management**
  - The goal of pain management is to find the correct balance between pain relief, functional impairment, and side effects of any medication used for to treat pain. A combination of drug and nondrug treatments may lower the dose of medications needed and reduce side effects from those medications.
• Nondrug treatment approaches may include physical and psychosocial therapies.
  o Psychosocial Therapy examples: Cognitive-Behavioral therapy, Guided Imagery with progressive muscle relaxation, Music, Meditation.

✓ What Else You Should Do

• Write down and share information about your loved one's pain with their healthcare provider.
• Use a Pain Diary to note important information useful to the healthcare provider.
• Encourage your loved one to try a non-drug treatment and document the impact on their pain in their Pain Diary.

Reference


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