

Pain Awareness Month — September 2018

September is Pain Awareness Month, when organizations work to raise awareness of how pain affects persons, families, communities, and the nation and to support national action to address pain. A 2011 Institute of Medicine report (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22553896>) has prompted strategic planning efforts, such as the 2016 National Pain Strategy (https://iprcc.nih.gov/sites/default/files/HHSNational_Pain_Strategy_508C.pdf) and the 2017 Federal Pain Research Strategy (<https://iprcc.nih.gov/Federal-Pain-Research-Strategy/Overview>), and efforts for their implementation.

A report on chronic pain in this issue (1) estimates that chronic pain affects approximately 50 million U.S. adults, and high-impact chronic pain (i.e., interfering with work or life most days or every day) affects approximately 20 million U.S. adults. Findings in this report will help guide federal efforts to address high-impact chronic pain, such as *Healthy People 2020* objectives (<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives>) and the CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6501e1.htm>). Better public education regarding expectations, beliefs, and understanding about pain are all important. Additional measures include professional education and training for better, comprehensive, and integrated pain management.

Better pain management is also a major element in addressing the current opioid crisis. Persons living with pain need safer and more effective alternatives for pain management. Additional information is available at <https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/about-the-epidemic/hhs-response/better-pain-management/index.html>.

Reference

1. CDC. Prevalence of chronic pain and high-impact chronic pain among adults—United States, 2016. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2018;67:1001–6.

Prevalence of Chronic Pain and High-Impact Chronic Pain Among Adults — United States, 2016

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Chronic pain, one of the most common reasons adults seek medical care (1), has been linked to restrictions in mobility and daily activities (2,3), dependence on opioids (4), anxiety and depression (2), and poor perceived health or reduced quality of life (2,3). Population-based estimates of chronic pain among U.S. adults range from 11% to 40% (5), with considerable population subgroup variation. As a result, the 2016 National Pain Strategy called for more precise prevalence estimates of chronic pain and high-impact chronic pain (i.e., chronic pain that frequently limits life or work activities) to reliably establish the prevalence of chronic pain and aid in the development

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Continuing Education examination available at https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/cme/conted_info.html#weekly.

