

PAIN MANAGEMENT NEWS

WINTER | 2009

Chronic Pain

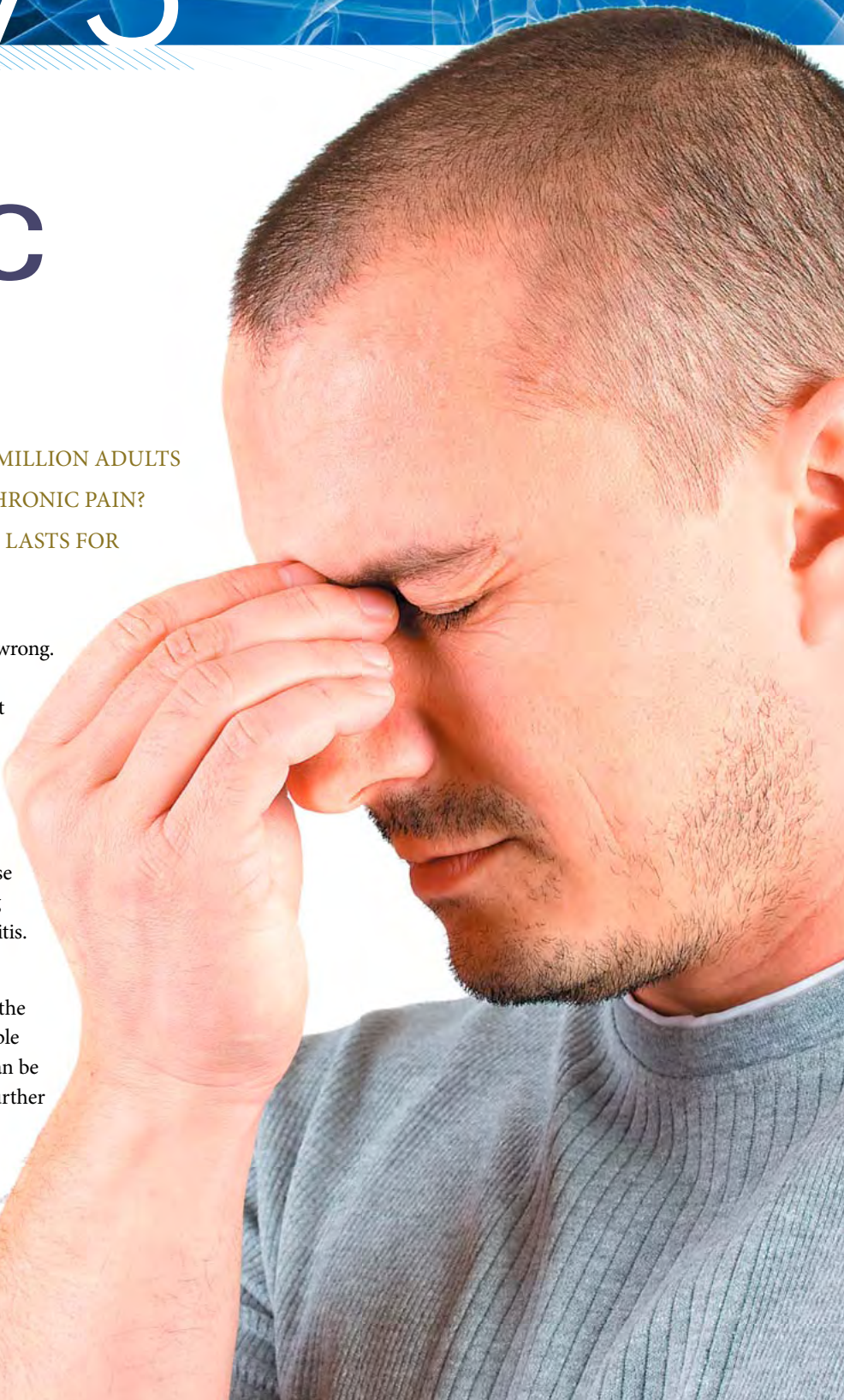
CHRONIC PAIN AFFECTS AN ESTIMATED 86 MILLION ADULTS IN THE U.S. ALONE. SO WHAT EXACTLY IS CHRONIC PAIN? THE TEXTBOOK ANSWER IS ANY PAIN THAT LASTS FOR MORE THAN 3 MONTHS.

Pain is your body's way of telling you that something is wrong. There are times that pain occurs, such as after an injury, surgery or illness, and this is normal. However, pain that last for weeks, months or even years is not normal.

Chronic pain can occur anywhere in your body and can range from being mildly annoying to being so debilitating that it prevents your daily activities. Unfortunately, anyone can get chronic pain and the cause is not always clear. In many cases, there is an underlying medical condition that is clear, such as diabetes or arthritis. But just as often, the cause is far from easy to diagnose.

If you suffer from chronic pain, it is important to be in the care of a physician who specializes in or is knowledgeable about the care and treatments for pain. Chronic pain can be unbearable and can lead to other conditions that will further compromise the quality of your life.

The good news is that we can help. There are many therapies and courses of action possible. Many times a multi therapeutic approach is called for. Living with chronic pain can be difficult and frustrating — but, when treated with medical intervention, chronic pain can be a manageable condition.



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ARE YOU AT AN INCREASED RISK FOR CHRONIC PAIN?

FACTORS THAT INCREASE THE RISK OF CHRONIC PAIN INCLUDE:

AGING – As we get older the aches and pains in our bodies tend to increase. However, chronic pain is not a normal part of growing older. There are medical conditions that cause pain as we age. Among them are arthritis, diabetes, and shingles. It is important to get medical help for underlying conditions at any age; however, the older we get, the more noticeable underlying conditions tend to become in their effects.

SMOKING – Nicotine can increase pain sensation, while at the same time decreasing the effectiveness of some medications. If you smoke, consider stopping.

PAST HEALTH PROBLEMS – Sometimes our past medical problems show up and compromise our current daily life. Previous surgeries may continue to cause pain. Prior injuries to joints and muscles are often culprits in chronic pain.

GENERAL HEALTH – If you suffer from a weakened immune system, you may be at greater risk for infections or other illnesses which in turn create pain in your body.

LIFESTYLE – Lifestyle choices such as eating unhealthy foods, not exercising enough, carrying too much weight or battling with a drug or alcohol dependency can all cause chronic pain issues.

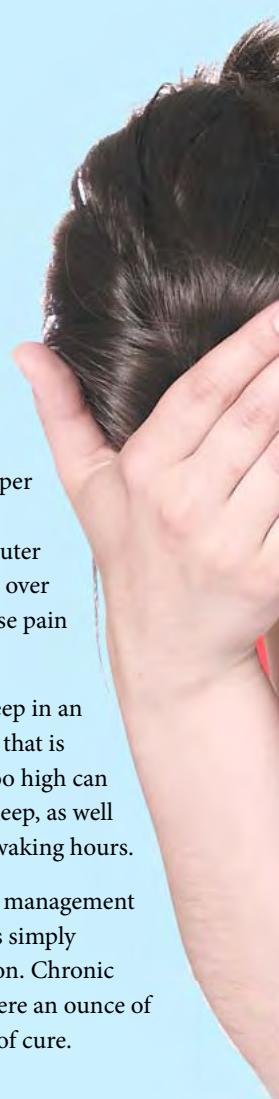
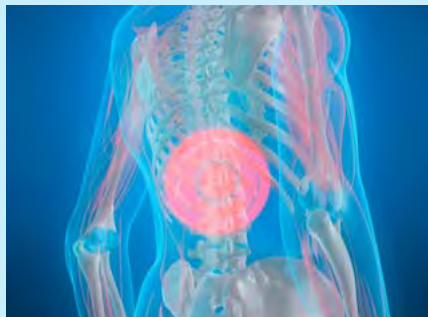
STRESS – Yes, with as much havoc as stress can cause in our lives it definitely affects pain levels in our bodies. Depression has painful physical symptoms. A history of physical,

emotional or sexual abuse is often common in patients who report chronic pain.

REPETITIVE MOTIONS – Daily activities such as improper lifting, standing with poor posture or even using a computer keyboard at the wrong height over a long period of time can cause pain and injury.

SLEEP ISSUES – Falling asleep in an incorrect position, a mattress that is worn out or a pillow that is too high can all affect the quality of your sleep, as well as contribute to pain during waking hours.

One of the more effective self management techniques for chronic pain is simply awareness and paying attention. Chronic pain is definitely one area where an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.



OF A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC PAIN OFTEN SUFFER FROM A LACK OF SLEEP WHICH IN TURN INCREASES THE LEVEL OF PAIN. PAIN AND SLEEP DEPRIVATION TEND TO GO HAND IN HAND, CONTRIBUTING TO A VICIOUS CYCLE.



WITHOUT A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP,

the body simply can't recoup from the stresses of daily life, which overwhelms the system and increases sensitivity to pain.

Poor sleep, disrupted sleep and insomnia take many forms: trouble falling asleep, waking up often, trouble getting back to sleep or waking up too early in the morning. Smoothing out sleep problems is crucial in the management of chronic pain.

Creating a comfort zone and easing into bedtime are key in getting the sleep we all need. Here are some additional tips:

- Don't listen to the news at the end of the day. Unfortunately, these days there is little of the positive on any newscast, and good news rarely sells ratings.
- Avoid caffeine—coffee, tea, colas and, yes, even chocolate—before bedtime.
- Listen to calm music or read before bedtime.
- Consider stretching or yoga.
- Meditate before going to bed.
- Soak in a hot tub with soothing oils.
- Dress appropriately in loose night clothing.
- Keep the temperature in your bedroom comfortable.
- Sleep in a darkened and quiet room.

Above all, be fiercely protective of your sleep. While there are many sleep therapies available, at the end of the day the quality of your sleep requires an active participation from you!



WELCOME TO INTEGRATED MEDICAL CARE AND REHABILITATION (IMCR), WHERE OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE EVERY PATIENT WITH AN INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH THAT UTILIZES THE EXPERTISE OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE, PAIN MANAGEMENT AND PHYSICAL THERAPY. THE GOAL OF OUR INTEGRATED APPROACH IS TO PROVIDE THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR EACH AND EVERY PATIENT.

IMCR PROVIDES CONSULTATION, EVALUATION AND TREATMENT OF:

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