Long Term Pain Medication Dependency in Burn Survivors

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Long Term Pain Medication Dependency in Burn Survivors
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Background

- Opioid Epidemic: State of Emergency
  - Of the 52,404 drug overdose deaths in 2015, 20,101 were related to prescription narcotics
  - Presently, it is common perception that people become addicted due to prescription narcotics they don’t need
  - As a result of the current sentiment, more patients are presenting with untreated pain in acute injuries
  - Due to the severity of pain seen in patients with burn injuries, they are treated with narcotic pain relievers regardless of their previous narcotic history
  - Most burn survivors are followed for at least one year after discharge
  - It is our standard practice to refer patients to pain management when addiction is suspected

Purpose

- To determine the relationship between patients with a history of substance abuse prior to their burn injury and continued opioid use after burn injury

Methods

- Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained
- Retrospective chart review of patients admitted to the LVHN Burn Center from August 1, 2015 to May 31, 2017
- Pre-admission medication, drug use history, pre-existing medical conditions, demographics, burn size, depth of burn, inpatient and outpatient prescriptions, as well as pain management referrals were recorded

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narcotics Before Burn Injury</th>
<th>Number of Patients</th>
<th>Percentage of Patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of Illicit Substance Abuse</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Alcohol Abuse</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicotine Dependence</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

- The 5 patients that were referred to pain management had a history of substance abuse
- 4 of those 5 patients previously used illicit drugs; it is unclear what substances the other patient abused
- The following do NOT correlate with a patient’s continued addiction:
  - Inpatient narcotic medication doses
  - Outpatient narcotic prescriptions
  - Pain level at admission
  - Pain level at discharge
  - Pain level at outpatient visits

Discussion

- In our studied burn population, we found no correlation between long term opioid abuse and doses administered in the medical setting surrounding the acute burn injury

Future Steps

- Conduct follow up interviews by phone with patients directly to determine pain management following discharge