



In Motion

Highlighting Articles Advancing Pain Research in Canada and the World

Featured article:

Guliani, H., Hadjistavropoulos, T., Jin, S., & Lix, L. M. (2021). **Pain-related health care costs for long-term care residents.** BMC Geriatrics, 21, 552. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-021-02424-2>

Key insights from the study:

- **Higher Costs for Residents with Pain:** Residents with clinically significant pain have higher health care costs compared to those with no pain or only mild pain.
- **Breakdown of Costs:** Increased costs are due to hospital stays, physician visits, and prescription drugs.
- **Potential Savings:** Better pain management could reduce health care costs and improve the quality of life for residents.

What happened?

Researchers used data from 24,870 long-term care (LTC) residents in Saskatchewan, Canada, between 2004 and 2015. They compared the health care costs of residents with clinically significant pain (CSP) to those with no pain or only mild, non-daily pain (NP/NDMP). They tracked costs related to hospitalizations, physician services, LTC, and prescription drugs.

Why is it important?

This study highlights the financial burden of pain on the healthcare system. The costs were greater in the pain group even after taking into account other comorbid health problems, prior health care costs, age and other important contributors. Residents with CSP incurred significantly higher health care costs. Understanding these costs is crucial for policymakers to justify investing in better pain management strategies. For example, residents with CSP had higher hospitalization costs, which accounted for a large portion of the overall expenses. This insight emphasizes the need for improved pain assessment and management in LTC settings.

What now?

To reduce health care costs and improve residents' quality of life, LTC facilities should focus on better pain management. This includes regular pain assessments and using validated tools to identify pain, especially in residents with dementia who may not be able to communicate their pain effectively. By addressing pain more effectively, LTC facilities can potentially lower hospitalization and medication costs, leading to overall cost savings and better health outcomes for residents.

