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**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE MARCH 16, 2017
12:00 PM Eastern Time**

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Interdisciplinary Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program Shown as Successful Method for Treating Older Adults with Chronic Pain

March 16, 2017, ORLANDO, Fla. – Up to half of older adults (aged 60 years or more) report experiencing chronic pain. A study presented today at the American Academy of Pain Medicine’s 33rd Annual Meeting as a scientific poster abstract considered the utility of interdisciplinary chronic rehabilitation programs in treating this patient population.

“A hurdle to treating patients with more advanced age is that they will frequently present with complex medical comorbidities,” says Kelly Martincin, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow at Cleveland Clinic, and lead author of the scientific poster abstract. “The power of an interdisciplinary program is in multiple clinicians sitting down together to examine a patient’s unique concerns from a number of different angles, and this is especially important for patients who present with complex comorbidities.”

This study included a retrospective analysis of 225 older adults and 1249 younger adults treated in an interdisciplinary chronic pain rehabilitation program between 2007 and 2012. Analysis showed that, while all patients included in the study showed significant improvement after being discharged from the interdisciplinary chronic rehabilitation program, significant differences were identified based on patient age and improvement achieved for depression, anxiety, and functional impairment, with older adults reporting fewer symptoms than younger adults. The study ultimately found that older adults benefit equally to – if not more than – younger adults in interdisciplinary chronic rehabilitation programs for the treatment of chronic pain.

Dr. Martincin believes that this research will improve treatment options for older adults suffering from chronic pain. “Physicians are always seeking the safest and most effective forms of treatment and prefer options that will not run the risks of impairing cognition, increase fall risks, etcetera. Establishing the value of an interdisciplinary program for the older adult non-cancer chronic pain population specifically provides physicians another tool to offer their patients.”

Poster 230 – Older Adults with Chronic Non-Cancer Pain Benefit from Treatment in an Interdisciplinary Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program

About AAPM

The American Academy of Pain Medicine is the premier medical association for pain physicians and their treatment teams with some 2,000 members. Now in its 34th year of service, the Academy's mission is to optimize the health of patients in pain and eliminate pain as a major public health problem by advancing the practice and specialty of pain medicine through education, training, advocacy and research. Information is available on the Academy's website at www.painmed.org.

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