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### **Mental Health Services in Pain Clinics Provide Significant Clinical Benefits to Patients with Chronic Pain**

April 26, 2018, VANCOUVER, B.C, Canada – Mental health embedded into a multidisciplinary pain treatment approach can improve chronic pain, function, mood, and sleep according to a recent study conducted at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Pain Medicine clinical network. The results were presented today as a scientific poster at the 34th Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Pain Medicine.

Physicians at UPMC have both a pain psychologist and a psychiatrist embedded within their clinics as part of a multimodal treatment plan following a comprehensive evaluation. Analyzing their registry of 15,000 chronic pain patients with PROMIS-based patient-reported outcomes, the researchers investigated the impact of seeing a pain psychologist on chronic pain care compared to a matched group who did not see a pain psychologist. Those patients included in the study had at least three pain clinic and three mental health visits.

Ajay Wasan, MD MSc, lead abstract author, is encouraged by the improved outcomes this study demonstrated. “The psychological components of chronic pain syndromes that amplify and perpetuate pain and disability are well known. Randomized trials have definitively shown that mental health treatment is clearly beneficial in chronic pain therapy. Our study is the first to show using real-world clinic data captured with a precise outcomes tracking approach that there are indeed significant clinical benefits to embedding a psychologist in a pain specialty practice.”

Dr. Wasan noted there are economic barriers to incorporating mental health treatment as part of a chronic pain treatment and believes, “the physicians in a pain medicine group have to make a commitment to share these expenses.” However, the positive effects of additional mental health services are truly additive to multimodal pain treatment outcomes.

*Poster 188 – Comparative Effectiveness of Embedded Mental Health Services in Pain Clinics Using Data from the Collaborative Health Outcomes Information Registry (CHOIR)*

**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 35th year of service, the Academy's mission is to advance and promote the full spectrum of multidisciplinary pain care, education, advocacy, and research to improve function and quality of life for people in pain. Information is available on the Academy's website at [www.painmed.org](http://www.painmed.org).

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