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### **Individualized Approach to Opioid Tapering Shows Success in Chronic Pain Patients Using Long-Term Opioids**

April 26, 2018, VANCOUVER, B.C, Canada – As healthcare providers continue to respond to the ongoing opioid overdose crisis, addressing patient risk associated with moderate to very high dose prescription opioids has become a national priority. Research presented today at the American Academy of Pain Medicine 34th Annual Meeting finds that individualized, patient-centered opioid tapering programs were successful in reducing opioid doses without increasing patient-reported pain intensity or pain interference.

The study followed nearly 100 chronic pain outpatients who were taking long-term opioids. These outpatients were provided education about the benefits of reducing opioids by their prescribing physician who then partnered with them to create and implement an individually-tailored opioid taper program. Following-up with patients at four months since their programs had been initiated, results showed that, on average, patients exceeded a 50% opioid dose reduction. Furthermore, the results of the study suggest that some patients are interested in reducing their prescription opioid doses; however, those taking long-term opioids may require a tapering program that lasts four months or longer to achieve opioid cessation.

“Our research highlights the need for individualized tapering programs that meet the patients’ specific needs,” says lead author, Maisa Ziadni, PhD. “Aggressive taper schedules lead to patient discomfort and distress, taper failure, and false beliefs that successful tapering is impossible and opioids must be continued. Our data suggest that tapering to lower and safer opioid doses is possible.”

*Poster 190 – Patient-Centered Prescription Opioid Tapering in Community Outpatients with Chronic Pain*

**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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