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**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE APRIL 26, 2018
12:00 PM Pacific Time**

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Top-Ranked Study Suggests Pain Rehabilitation Programs Offering Behavioral Treatment Decrease Overall Healthcare Use Among Patients with Chronic Non-Cancer Pain

April 26, 2018, VANCOUVER, B.C, Canada —A new study suggests that for patients with chronic non-cancer pain, pain rehabilitation programs (PRPs) decrease their healthcare usage and encourage access to behavioral treatments that are more likely to address the impact of pain, reduce opioid use, and promote improved functioning and quality of life. These new findings were presented today at the American Academy of Pain Medicine’s 34th Annual Meeting as a scientific poster abstract.

“For some patients, they benefit from the type of intensive outpatient program that PRPs provide, particularly when trying to taper or discontinue opioids... ultimately patients may benefit in terms of care, outcomes, and cost in terms of their time and resources,” says lead abstract author Christy Hunt, DO MS.

Statistically significant trends in this research suggest that patients decrease use of opioids and increase behavioral health usage and decrease the number of primary care and specialty provider visits following participation in pain rehabilitation. This research was completed by using a retrospective cohort study of patients who enrolled in a PRP at a quaternary academic medical center.

“We were intrigued that we had statistically significant results even with a sample size of 25, which speaks to the robustness of the relationship between pain rehabilitation and decreased non-behavioral healthcare utilization and opioid use and increased utilization of resources that include cognitive behavioral therapy,” says Dr. Hunt.

Hospitals can look to reduce medical costs and allocate resources more efficiently by investing in patient care that seeks to manage and reduce chronic pain and opioid use, but Dr. Hunt believes more studies need to be completed.

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By asking herself, “What questions best help my patients?” Dr. Hunt immediately thought, “how PRPs impact healthcare utilization was important, because in a healthcare system with limited resources it is important to make sure that we are considering what treatments are most effective for our patients that allow us to be good stewards of their time and resources as well.”

Poster 293—Group 2- Healthcare Utilization Analysis of a Comprehensive Pain Rehabilitation Program: A Retrospective Cohort Study

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.

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