Based on Tip 54
Managing Chronic Pain in Adults With or in Recovery From Substance Use Disorders

KAP KEYS FOR CLINICIANS
KAP Keys were developed to accompany the Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). These KAP Keys are based entirely on TIP 54 and are designed to meet the needs of the busy clinician for concise, easily accessed “how-to” information.

For more information on the topics in these KAP Keys, see TIP 54: Managing Chronic Pain in Adults With or in Recovery From Substance Use Disorders

Other TIPs relevant to these KAP Keys:

TIP 40: Clinical Guidelines for the Use of Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Addiction

TIP 43: Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Addiction in Opioid Treatment Programs

TIP 45: Detoxification and Substance Abuse Treatment
### Elements of a Comprehensive Patient Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Assessment Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pain and Coping          | • Location, character (e.g., shooting or stinging, continuous or intermittent)  
• Pain types (i.e., nociceptive, neuropathic, mixed)  
• Lowest and highest extent of pain in a typical day, on a 0 to 10 scale  
• Usual pain in a typical day, on a 0 to 10 scale  
• When and how the pain started  
• Exacerbating factors (e.g., exertion/activity, food consumption, elimination, stress, medical issues)  
• Palliating factors (e.g., heat, cold, stretching, rest, medications, complementary and alternative treatments)  
• Prior evaluations to determine the source of pain  
• Response to previous pain treatments, including complementary and alternative treatments and interventional treatments  
• Goals and expectations for pain relief |
| Collateral Information   | It is crucial to obtain such information as:  
• Findings of other clinicians, prior and current  
• Family concerns, beliefs, and observations  
• Pharmacist concerns, where relevant  
• Data from State electronic prescription monitoring programs, if available  
• Medical records, including psychiatric and substance use disorders (SUDs) treatment records |
### Elements of a Comprehensive Patient Assessment (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Assessment Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Function** | Effect of pain on:  
- Activities of daily living/ability to care for oneself  
- Sleep  
- Mood  
- Work/household responsibilities  
- Sex  
- Socialization and support systems  
- Recreation  
- Goals and expectations for restored function |
| **Contingencies** |  
- Family support of wellness versus illness behavior  
- Vocational incentives and disincentives  
- Financial incentives and disincentives  
- Insurance/legal incentives and disincentives  
- Environmental and social resources for wellness |
| **Substance Use History and Risk for Addiction** |  
- Current use of substances, including tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter medications, prescription medications, and illicit drugs (confirmed by toxicology)  
- Focus on opioids to the exclusion of other treatments  
- Adverse consequences of use (e.g., functional impairment; legal, social, financial, family, work, medical problems)  
- Age at first use  
- Treatment history, including attendance at mutual-help groups  
- Periods of abstinence  
- Strength of recovery support network (e.g., sponsor, sober support network, mutual-help meetings)  
- Family history of SUD  
- History of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or trauma |
### Elements of a Comprehensive Patient Assessment (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Assessment Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Co-Occurring Conditions and Disorders** | • Psychological conditions (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], somatoform disorders)  
• Medical conditions (e.g., hepatic, renal, cardiovascular, metabolic)  
• Cognitive impairments (e.g., dementia, delirium, intoxication, traumatic brain injury) |
| **Physical Exam**                    | • Relevant associated signs of pain disorder  
• Signs of substance abuse (e.g., track marks, hepatomegaly, residua of skin infections, nasal and oropharyngeal pathology) |
| **Mental Status**                    | • Medication focused  
• Somatic preoccupation  
• Mood  
• Suicidal ideation and behavior  
• Cognition (e.g., attentional capacity, memory) |
Algorithm for Managing Chronic Pain in Patients With SUDs

Evaluation sufficient to confirm:
- Diagnosis of chronic pain (pain does not result from a health-threatening or correctable pathology)
- Functional impairment
- Psychological comorbidity

Active addiction
- Start addiction treatment
- Defer opioids/analgesia
(Patient already on opioids should have trial of opioid weaning. Opioids may be continued only if the patient immediately initiates SUD treatment.)
- Analgesic determined by pain physiology
- Implement non-pharmacologic treatment

In recovery
- Without medication
- On agonist therapy

Without medication
- Non-opioid analgesics as determined by pain physiology

On agonist therapy
- Continue agonist; may increase dose as required for analgesia
- Concurrent
  - Nonpharmacologic pain treatments
  - Reconditioning as determined by functional impairment
  - Treatment of psychiatric/sleep comorbidities

Successful outcome
- Inadequate benefit

Inadequate benefit
- Initiate opioid trial if risk is warranted

Successful outcome
- Failure
- Relapse

Failure
- Wean opioid
- Continue other therapies

Relapse
- Success
- Continue strategy
- Monitor for demonstration of continued benefit
### Summary of Non-Opioid Analgesics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analgesic</th>
<th>Addictive</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acetaminophen</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Should normally not exceed 4 g/day; in adults with hepatic disease, the maximum dose is 2 g/day. Potentiates analgesia without potentiating respiratory and sedative side effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Are used to relieve numerous types of pain, especially bone, dental, and inflammatory, and enhance opioid analgesia. May cause gastrointestinal bleeding and renal insufficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serotonin-Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Are used to relieve several nonstructural types of pain (e.g., migraine, fibromyalgia, low back pain) and probably others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricyclic Antidepressants</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Have demonstrated efficacy in migraine prophylaxis, fibromyalgia, many neuropathic pains, vulvodynia, and functional bowel disorders. Watch for anticholinergic side effects and orthostatic hypotension (fall risk in older people).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticonvulsants</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some have demonstrated efficacy in relieving fibromyalgia, migraine prophylaxis, and neuropathic pains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topical Analgesics</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Comprise several unrelated substances (e.g., NSAIDs, capsaicin, local anesthetics). Work locally, not systemically, and therefore usually have minimal systemic side effects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Summary of Non-Opioid Analgesics (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analgesic</th>
<th>Addictive</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antipsychotics</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Have no demonstrated analgesic effect, except to abort migraine/cluster headache. Risks include extrapyramidal reactions and metabolic syndrome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle Relaxants</td>
<td>Carisoprodol (Soma) is addictive. Some others have significant abuse potential.</td>
<td>Have not been shown to be effective beyond the acute period. Some potentiate opioids and are not recommended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzodiazepines</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not recommended (see TIP 54, pp. 35–36).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabinoids</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not recommended (see TIP 54, p. 37).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Steps To Take if Opioid Therapy Is Indicated

Step 1. Educate patient and family about treatment options, sharing the decision about the goal and expected outcome of therapy.

Step 2. Discuss treatment agreement with the patient and family.

Step 3. Obtain a written opioid agreement.

Step 4. Determine and document the treatment plan.

Step 5. Initiate a trial of opioid therapy.


Methadone Titration

The titration of methadone for chronic pain is complex and potentially dangerous because methadone levels increase during the first few days of treatment. This risk is compounded by the variable half-life among individuals and the large number of drug interactions. In addition, cardiac toxicity (e.g., QT prolongation, torsade de pointes) is possible. The majority of deaths secondary to methadone occur in the first 14 days of use because:

- The initial dose is too high.
- It is titrated too quickly.
- It interacts with other drugs or medications.

Ten Steps of Universal Precautions

Clinicians should adopt a universal precautions approach toward their patients who have chronic noncancer pain (CNCP). The term *universal precautions* first emerged in the context of infectious disease treatment and referred to using infection control procedures with all patients. In the context of pain treatment, a *universal precautions approach* refers to a minimum standard of care applied to all patients who have CNCP, whatever their assessed risk. A universal precautions approach improves care and shows due diligence in an era of increasing illegal use of prescription opioids.

1. Make a diagnosis with appropriate differential.
2. Perform a psychological assessment, including risk of addictive disorders.
3. Obtain informed consent.
4. Use a treatment agreement.
5. Conduct assessments of pain level and function before and after the intervention.
6. Begin an appropriate trial of opioid therapy with or without adjunctive medications and therapies.
7. Reassess pain score and level of function.
8. Regularly assess the “4A’s” of pain medication.
9. Periodically review pain diagnosis and co-occurring conditions, including addictive disorders.
10. Document initial evaluation and followup visits.

# Addiction Behaviors Checklist

## Addiction Behaviors Since Last Visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Patient used illicit drugs or evidences problem drinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Patient has hoarded medication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Patient used more opioids than prescribed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Patient ran out of medications early</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Patient has increased use of opioids</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Patient used analgesics PRN (as needed) when prescription is for time-contingent use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Patient received opioids from more than one provider</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Patient bought medications on the streets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Addiction Behaviors Within Current Visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Patient appears sedated or confused (e.g., slurred speech, unresponsive)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Patient expresses worries about addiction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Patient expresses a strong preference for a specific type of analgesic or a specific route of administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Patient expresses concern about future availability of opioid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Patient reports worsened relationships with family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Patient misrepresents analgesic prescription or use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Addiction Behaviors Within Current Visit

### Addiction Behaviors Checklist (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Patient indicates she or he “needs” or “must have” analgesic medications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Discussion of analgesic medications is the predominant issue of visit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Patient exhibits lack of interest in rehabilitation or self-management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Patient reports minimal/inadequate relief from opioid analgesic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Patient indicates difficulty with using medication agreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Significant others express concern over patient’s use of analgesics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Determine whether risks outweigh benefits of opioid therapy in this patient, employing the following criteria:

- Inability to maintain analgesia despite reasonable dose escalation
- Intolerable side effects at the minimum dose that produces effective analgesia
- Reasonable attempts at opioid rotation unsuccessful
- Persistent noncompliance with patient treatment agreement
- Deterioration in physical, emotional, or social functioning attributed to opioid therapy

Establish collaborative relationship with patient around need for discontinuation of opioid therapy:

- Review exit criteria agreed on in patient treatment agreement
- Clarify that exit is for patient’s (not doctor’s) benefit
- Clarify that exiting opioid therapy is not synonymous with abandoning pain management or abandoning the patient

Patient appears to have a problem with drug addiction.

No apparent addiction problem. Patient able to cooperate with office-based taper.

Patient unable or unwilling to cooperate with outpatient taper.

Refer for addiction management or comanagement.

- Taper opioids slowly, as tolerated; typically 25% of current dose can be reduced each week.
- If withdrawal discomfort persists, use clonidine or similar agents to attenuate. Doxepin or gabapentin may also be useful.
- Implement non-opioid pain management strategies, including psychosocial support; cognitive–behavioral therapies; physical therapy; non-opioid analgesics; and management of insomnia, anxiety, and depression.

- Provide sufficient opioid for 1-month taper or maintenance until admission to SUD treatment.
- Refer to inpatient program or comprehensive outpatient program, or similar services, as available.
- If concerned about inadvertent overdose, prescribe frequent (daily, if necessary) nonlethal amounts as tapering proceeds.
Ordering Information

TIP 54
Managing Chronic Pain in Adults With or in Recovery From Substance Use Disorders

TIP 54-Related Products:
Quick Guide for Clinicians Based on TIP 54

This publication may be ordered or downloaded from SAMHSA’s Publications Ordering Web page at http://store.samhsa.gov. Or, please call SAMHSA at 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español).

Do not reproduce or distribute this publication for a fee without specific, written authorization from the Office of Communications, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.