

# Physicians Frustrated About Chronic-Pain Care

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Contributing Writer

ORLANDO, FLA. — West Virginia family physicians who were surveyed expressed apprehension and frustration about treating chronic, nonmalignant pain, reported Charles D. Ponte, Pharm.D., at the American Academy of Family Physicians' annual conference.

"Chronic, nonmalignant pain is very problematic for physicians," said Dr. Ponte,

professor of clinical pharmacy and family medicine at West Virginia University.

Dr. Ponte and his colleagues sent a 20-item survey to 537 members of the West Virginia Academy of Family Physicians. The investigators received 185 completed surveys.



More than three-quarters of respondents indicated that they experience anxiety when prescribing medication for chronic, nonmalignant pain. Regulatory scrutiny impacts prescribing practices, 65% of respondents said.

**'Chronic, nonmalignant pain is very problematic for physicians.'**

DR. PONTE

Treating chronic, nonmalignant pain

is frustrating, said 85% of the physicians, while 89% called it time-consuming. Sixty percent of respondents did not think their formal medical training prepared them to effectively manage pain.

The survey also indicated some gaps between respondents' answers and current standards of care. For example, 65% of respondents would prescribe transdermal fentanyl to an opioid-naive patient, and 36% thought propoxyphene was appropriate for an elderly patient. ■



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