

# EVIDENCE-BASED NONPHARMACOLOGIC STRATEGIES FOR COMPREHENSIVE PAIN CARE: THE CONSORTIUM PAIN TASK FORCE WHITE PAPER



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## ABSTRACT

Medical pain management is in crisis; from the pervasiveness of pain to inadequate pain treatment, from the escalation of prescription opioids to an epidemic in addiction, diversion and overdose deaths. The rising costs of pain care and managing adverse effects of that care have prompted action from state and federal agencies including the DOD, VHA, NIH, FDA and CDC.

There is pressure for pain medicine to shift away from reliance on opioids, ineffective procedures and surgeries toward comprehensive pain management that includes evidence-based nonpharmacologic options. This White Paper details the historical context and magnitude of the current pain problem including individual, social and economic impacts as well as the challenges of pain management for patients and a healthcare workforce engaging prevalent strategies not entirely based in current evidence. Detailed here is the evidence-base for nonpharmacologic therapies effective in postsurgical pain with opioid sparing, acute non-surgical pain, cancer pain and chronic pain. Therapies reviewed include acupuncture therapy, massage therapy, osteopathic and chiropractic manipulation, meditative movement therapies Tai chi and yoga, mind body behavioral interventions, dietary components and self-care/self-efficacy strategies.

Transforming the system of pain care to a responsive comprehensive model necessitates that options for treatment and collaborative care must be evidence-based and include effective nonpharmacologic strategies that have the advantage of reduced risks of adverse events and addiction liability.

The evidence demands a call to action to increase awareness of effective nonpharmacologic treatments for pain, to train healthcare practitioners and administrators in the evidence base of effective nonpharmacologic practice, to advocate for policy initiatives that remedy system and reimbursement barriers to evidence-informed comprehensive pain care, and to promote ongoing research and dissemination of the role of effective nonpharmacologic treatments in pain, focused on the short- and long-term therapeutic and economic impact of comprehensive care practices.

**Keywords:** Non Surgical Pain Management, Public Health, Evidence-Based Practice in Health Care System, Acute Pain Management, Integrative Medicine, Chronic Pain Management

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The Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health (the Consortium) is an institutional member organization of 72 North American academic medical centers and health systems whose mission is to advance evidence-based integrative medicine and health in research, curricula, and sustainable models of clinical care.

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