**Physical Therapy Special Issue Highlights Effectiveness of Nonopioid Approaches to Pain**

ALEXANDRIA, VA, April 16, 2018 — Early utilization of physical therapist treatment can reduce opioid use and downstream health care costs. That’s just one important takeaway from the latest edition of *Physical Therapy (PTJ)*, the official scientific journal of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), which today published a special issue devoted to nonpharmacological pain management.

In five original research papers released online ahead of print for the May special issue:
- Patients who received physical therapist treatment immediately following arthroscopic hip surgery were associated with lower downstream costs and lower opioid use.
- People treated by a physical therapist within three days of the onset of low back pain were associated with lower total health care costs and lower opioid use.
- Telehealth physical activity programs for older adults with low back pain improved physical function.
- Analysis of patient screening suggested it may be possible to predict which patients are at risk for long-standing musculoskeletal pain.
- Patient education about pain’s link to the brain improved the participation of patients with chronic spinal pain in beneficial physical activity programs.

“This special issue adds new evidence to a growing body of evidence on the important role of nonpharmacological interventions for the management of chronic pain,” said Editor in Chief Alan M. Jette, PT, PhD. “The need for this information has never been so urgent.”

According to the American Academy of Pain Medicine, 100 million Americans live with chronic pain, and many of them turn to opioids to manage it. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends pursuing nonopioid options like physical therapy for the safe management of chronic pain. Physical therapists treat pain through prescribed movement and exercise, hands-on care and patient education.

APTA’s #ChoosePT campaign raises awareness about the risk of opioids for long-term pain management and physical therapy as a safe and effective alternative, consistent with CDC guidelines.

The American Physical Therapy Association represents more than 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and students of physical therapy nationwide. Visit MoveForwardPT.com to learn more about the types of conditions physical therapists treat, and find a physical therapist in your area.

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