

Cancer Pain Assessment and Treatment Curriculum Guidelines. The Ad Hoc Committee on Cancer Pain of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

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More than 70% of patients with cancer develop significant pain at some time during the course of their illness. Despite the general consensus that most cancer pain can be treated effectively, many patients receive inadequate treatment of their pain. One significant contributing factor is the failure of health care professionals to receive formal training in this important aspect of oncology. The Cancer Pain Assessment and Treatment Curriculum Guidelines reflect the American Society of Clinical Oncology's commitment to providing optimal pain relief to patients with cancer. These guidelines represent an effort to promote formal instruction on the assessment and treatment of cancer pain in training programs and continuing education courses.

The curriculum is broad in scope and applicable to patients of all ages. The guidelines emphasize the need for (1) routine pain assessment, (2) proficiency in prescribing opioids, nonopioid analgesics, and adjuvant medications, and (3) an understanding of the potential benefits of antineoplastic, anesthetic, neurosurgical, and behavioral approaches, which often require a coordinated multidisciplinary approach.

This curriculum should prove a valuable guide to those who wish further education on the optimal treatment of cancer pain.