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From the Editor

This issue of the *Journal of Back and Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation* has a particular focus on pain, including the use of opioids in the treatment of chronic pain. In particular, Dr. Norman Harden and colleagues, from the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, present a case comparison on the status and functional recovery of patients on daily opioids. Later in the issue, Harden and his co-authors participate in a Point/Counterpoint on the use of opioids in treating chronic pain along with Dr. Miroslav Backonja, from the Medical College of Wisconsin.

As many of us know, the issue of 'to use or not to use opioids' is one which has created a wide range of opinions, as can be seen in the Point/Counterpoint, as well as the Editorial, presented by Dr. Ernest Johnson. The Point/Counterpoint was generated in an effort to continue the ongoing discussion and debate on the use of opioids in treating chronic pain. It follows the recent publication of a consensus statement from the American Academy of Pain Medicine and the American Pain Society on the use of opioids [1].

We believe this statement was meant to be a general working overview, one which will continue to be modified over time, as evidence on the subject presents itself. Therefore, this Point/Counterpoint examines the scientific evidence behind this and other statements and attempts to provide constructive arguments for and against the use of opioids in treating chronic pain patients.

As clinicians charged with determining the appropriate course of treatment for our chronic pain patients, we would also like to hear from you on this issue.

In wrapping up our focus on pain, Dr. Gerald Aronoff, a leader in the field of pain medicine and current President of the American Academy of Pain Medicine, presents an article on 'Evaluation and Management of Back Pain: Preventing Disability'. Other topics include neuromuscular and somatic problems of brain injury patients, guidelines for participation in collision activities and chronic whiplash associated disorder.

We continue to receive manuscripts spanning the breadth of topics that fall under the umbrella of back and musculoskeletal rehabilitation. We look forward to presenting issues like this one that seek to both reinforce and challenge our way of thinking and methods of treatment.

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References

- [1] The use of opioids for the treatment of chronic pain: a consensus statement from the American Academy of Pain Medicine and the American Pain Society. *Clin J Pain* 1997;13:6-8.