

Treating pain through Geriatric Enhanced Modalities (GEM)



Many Americans experience chronic pain on a daily basis, oftentimes as a side effect of another condition, such as arthritis, back injury, shingles, fractures or sinusitis, to name a few.

Chronic pain can also be a condition unto itself -- one that often has no cure. The highest cost of pain is loss of quality of life and an inability to do even the simplest of tasks, such as dressing oneself, making a cup of coffee or even spending time with loved ones. Chronic pain also can carry its own side effect, as many of its sufferers experience depression as result of their pain.

Hospitals, outpatient clinics and rehabilitation therapy providers, including Aegis Therapies, successfully treat patients for pain management through the use of various modalities in conjunction with standard physical therapy, occupational therapy and medication.

Aegis takes these procedures one step further by utilizing a specially designed proprietary treatment, program called “Geriatric Enhanced Modalities” (GEM) into its therapy procedures.

GEM makes use of electrical stimulation, ultrasound, short-wave diathermy, electromyography and/ or infrared and low level laser light therapy into treatment of conditions commonly associated with the geriatric population. In addition

to reducing acute and chronic musculoskeletal pain for patients, GEM has been proven effective in reducing pain caused by edema, inflammation, wound healing, improving muscle weakness, discoordination, reduced range of motion at specific joints, and reducing incontinence.

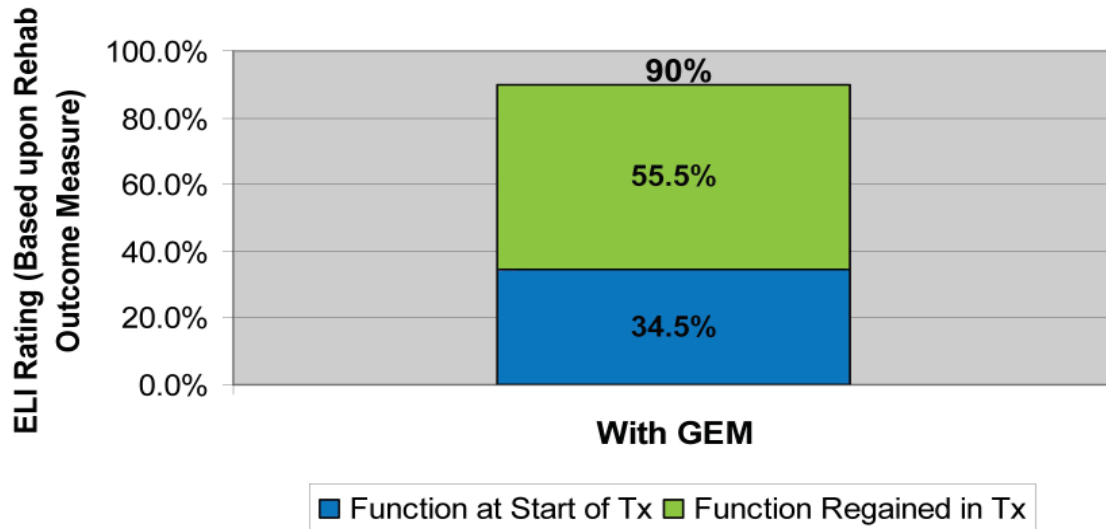
In most cases, enhanced modalities are used in conjunction with more active forms of physical therapy. As the patient begins to exhibit signs of improvement, the use of modalities decreases while physical activity and exercise increase. Selection of the most appropriate modality or modalities for any patient may depend on the desired functional outcome, the underlying impairment, and the patient’s preference or prior experience with the modality.

Depending on criteria, the patient may be prescribed one or more of the following modalities:

- Laser and infrared light therapy which use acupuncture or a trigger point to direct the photo energy to the affected area.
- Ultrasound emits high and low frequency sound waves to penetrate tissues, causing deep tissue muscle warming and muscle relaxation. Ultrasound is very effective in treating muscle tightness and spasms, and increases circulation.

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Ability to Function w/o Pain



Note: 238 patients were included in this testing data.

- Electrical stimulation which transmits an electrical current through electrodes placed on the skin to contract a single muscle or group of muscles and to modulate transmission of pain. Stimulation via electrical pulses helps strengthen the affected muscle, promotes blood supply to the area, and reduce pain.
- Short-wave diathermy which uses high-frequency currents to produce heat in body tissue. These currents are not intense enough to damage tissue, but they are strong enough to treat conditions such as chronic arthritis, bursitis and fractures, among others.

Aegis Rehab Outcomes from 2009 show that Medicare patients who received GEM therapy showed significant improvement. Prior to treatment, these patients rated their pain as at least a “7” on a 10-point scale. They typically reported needing very strong prescription pain medications on a regular basis just to be able to sleep. After a course of treatment using the GEM program, patients rate their pain as a “1 or 2” on a 10-point scale. They also report that they no longer need prescription medication, only using mild over-the-counter medications as needed.

Greater therapy options for patients

As a viable therapy program, Aegis’ modality protocols are consistent with standards established by national therapy organizations (APTA and AOTA) and are in accordance with the guidelines of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

As therapists, it is important that we continue to develop the programs that will give patients the greatest opportunity for positive outcomes and a better quality of life.

Given that no two patients are alike, it stands to reason that therapy should evolve to meet greatly differing needs. The GEM program has given Aegis therapists a unique approach in helping patients manage debilitating chronic pain and lessen its negative impact on their day-to-day lives.



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