

A stylized, light-colored illustration of a plant with several leaves and a cluster of small, round buds or flowers, positioned on the left side of the slide against a dark brown background.

PAIN IN PEOPLE WITH COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Arthritis and Disability Health Conference
Kellogg Center, East Lansing, MI
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Expressions of Pain

- Physiological changes
- Facial expressions
- Aggressive behavior
- Vocal expressions
- Body posture
- Withdrawal and less interaction
- Flinching



Assessment of Pain



Causes of Pain

- Immobility, contractures
- Degenerative joint disease
- Musculoskeletal (joint problems, muscle spasms)
- Infections (ear, kidney, etc.)
- Oral or dental pathology
- Gastrointestinal conditions (e.g., ileus, gastritis, peptic ulcers)



Causes Continued

- Headache, allergy-related symptoms
- Renal conditions (e.g., kidney stones, bladder distension)
- Osteoporosis with vertebral compression fractures
- Neuropathies (diabetic neuropathy, neuralgias)
- Bone fractures
- Self-injury

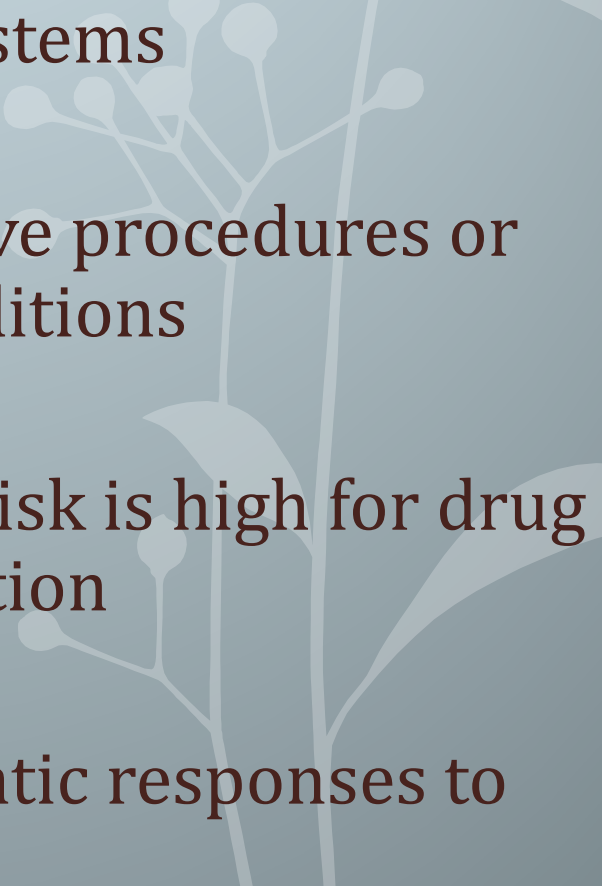


Causes Continued

- Epilepsy
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Pressure ulcers, amputations
- Menstrual cramps
- Procedures (e.g., wound care, positioning)

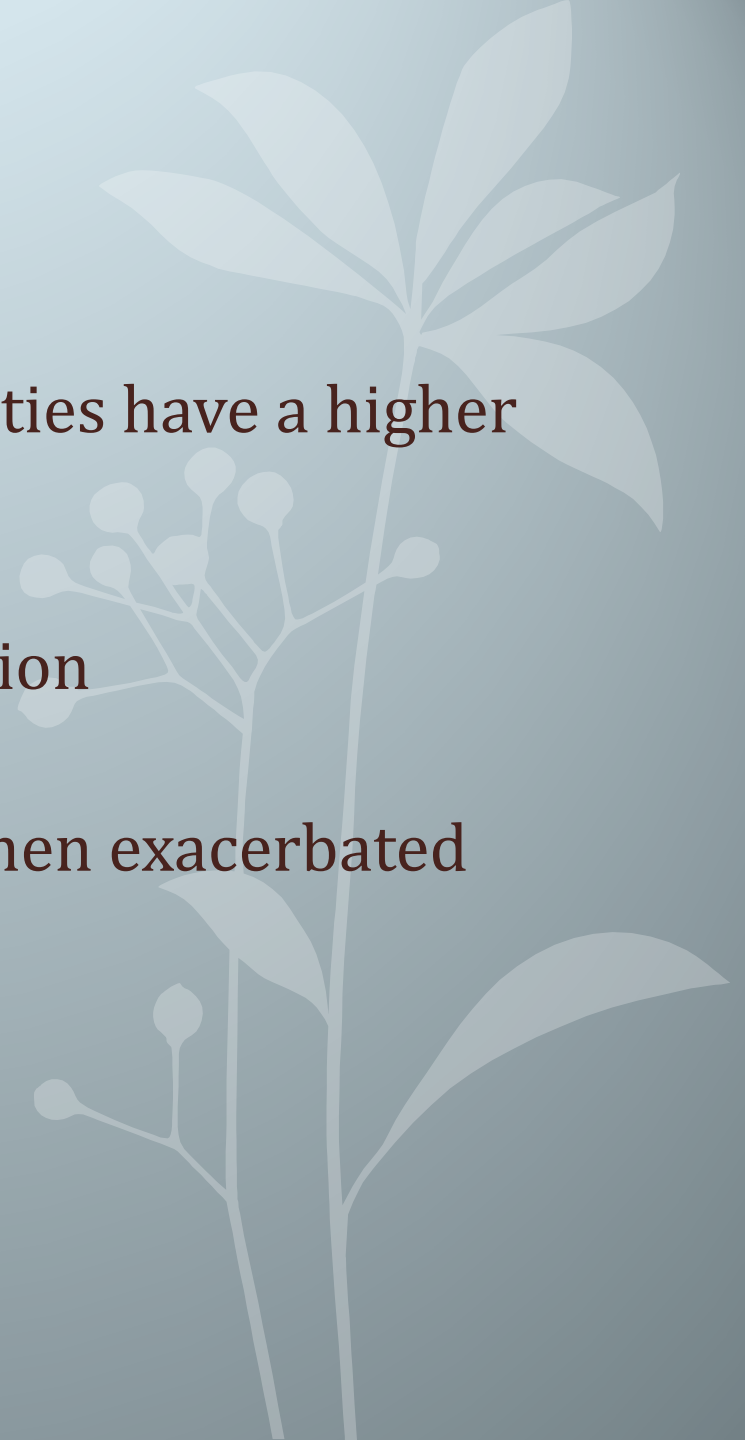


Higher Risk – Cognitive Impairments

- Compromised neurological systems
 - Vulnerable to recurrent invasive procedures or lifelong chronic disabling conditions
 - Because of other treatments, risk is high for drug interactions with pain medication
 - May have altered or idiosyncratic responses to medications
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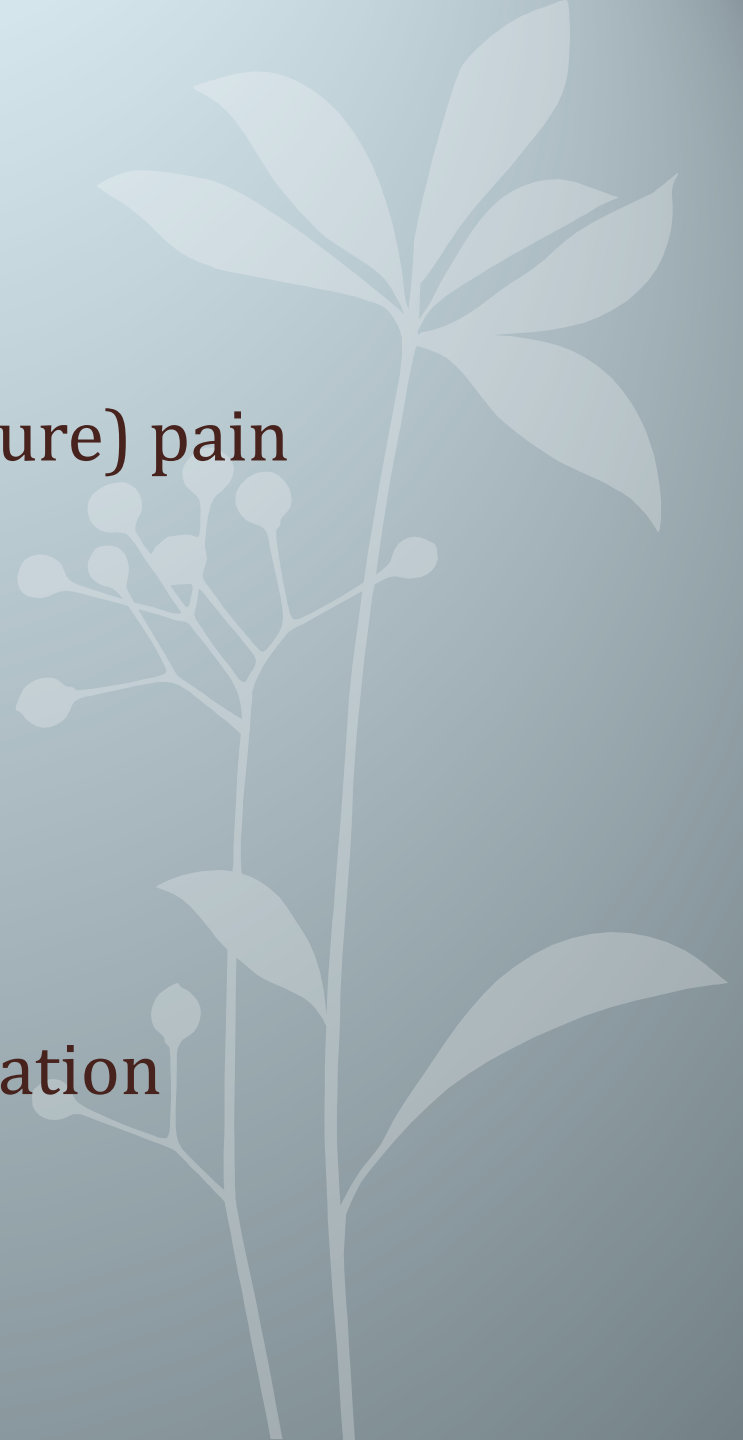
Undiagnosed Pain

- Mis-belief that those with disabilities have a higher threshold of pain
- Under-utilization of pain medication
- Untreated conditions which are then exacerbated
- Psychological effects
- Effects on caregivers



Support

- Anticipated (surgery or procedure) pain
- Advanced preparation
- Care coordination
- Careful monitoring of all medication





If in doubt

References

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- Oberlander, T. F. and Symons, F. J. (Eds.) (2006) *Pain in Children and Adults with Developmental Disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.
- Zabalia, M. Beyond Misconceptions: Assessing Pain in Children with Mild to Moderate Intellectual Disability. *Frontiers in Public Health*. 2013;1:1-5.

Thank you!

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