Back Pain and Painkiller Effectiveness

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Effectiveness of Painkillers on Back Pain

Individuals suffering from long-term back pain are familiar with the continuous search for relief from discomfort. The average back pain sufferer understands the typical route of finding the appropriate treatment for their condition. Unfortunately, the path to a pain-free existence is often met with obstacles to the medication that effectively relieves back pain. So, what is the effectiveness of painkillers? Let's take a look.

A typical visit to a doctor tends to begin with ordinary questions, exams and often referrals to a pain management specialist who is highly knowledgeable in terms of which pain medications work most efficiently in relieving back pain.

Effective treatment of back pain must be examined in terms of whether the pain is acute or chronic. The types of injury or condition that are associated with the discomfort must also be carefully looked at to properly treat the patient.

There are several types of injury that an individual may sustain that would require different painkillers to attack the origin of the problem sufficiently. The average first-line medication in the treatment of most back pain is over-the-counter analgesics. Doctors may also recommend the use of alternating hot and cold compresses on the area to reduce pain and possible swelling. Depending on the severity of the pain, certain individuals may find relief with this type of treatment.

Effective treatment of back pain with stronger painkillers is usually the decided route when conventional over-the-counter pain medication is unable to control the discomfort. Depending on the type of injury an individual has sustained, different approaches to medication must be made.

For back pain, the most commonly prescribed medications include the following:

- Anti-inflammatory pain relievers (NSAIDs) such as Ibuprofen or naproxen.
- Muscle relaxers such as carisoprodol, cyclobenzaprine or metaxalone.
- Opioid-like analgesics such as tramadol.
- Opioid narcotic medication such as hydrocodone, codeine or oxycodone.

For a doctor to decide which type of medication may be the most appropriate, the type of back pain must be identified. For back muscle discomfort, anti-inflammatory medications and muscle relaxants are the most often prescribed treatment.

Doctors tend to prescribe opioid-like medications or narcotic painkillers for injury to the spine, severe nerve pain and other back pain that is non-specific. The danger of maintaining treatment of back pain with the use of opiate medications is the potential for addiction and abuse. Over time, the body becomes accustomed to the medication, which in turn requires larger doses of these types of medications to effectively relieve pain. Extreme precautions must be taken when prescribed narcotic medications.

The overall effectiveness of painkillers for back pain is somewhat individuated due to the differences in metabolism, body size and tolerance to such medications. While there is no one set painkiller that stands out as the most effective, to some extent, all have their place in the continuing treatment of back pain.