

Modern Pain Management for Women

Today's women lead a richer, more active life-style. This includes physical activities such as tennis, golf, hiking, bicycling, competitive sports and even skydiving! And with sports, come sports-related injuries. As we age, our bodies still tend to breakdown more often with a longer recuperation period, even with proper muscle training and healthy life-style choices. Medications that you could "stomach" in the past may cause some difficulty later in life. For example, the best kind of medications for muscle, bone and joint pain are in a class called nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), but these can cause severe stomach pains, leading to ulcers, and can interfere with other medications. Examples of NSAIDs are ketoprofen, diclofenac and ibuprofen. Fortunately, with compounding, a patient can get this type of medication in an effective manner, in a lower dose, and without the GI side-effects.

Compounding allows a pharmacist to place an NSAID, such as ketoprofen, in varying strengths into a special gel that incorporates the drug into small spherical units called micelles (micelles are also found in high-end cosmetics that rejuvenate the skin). These micelles allow the NSAID to easily penetrate skin, and studies have shown that the concentrations of the drug (especially ketoprofen) are up to 100 times higher where you apply the medication than in any other part of the body. This allows a physician to treat his patient's local problem with a local drug. If there are other types of pain, such as nerve pain, fibromyalgia-type pain, or TMJ, other medications such as gabapentin, ketamine, and lidocaine can be added. Although there are other ways to get the medications to go into the affected area (such as phonophoresis and iontophoresis), a topical gel allows the patient greater control over her pain treatment.

For more profound pain, compounding allows the pharmacist to create special doses and dose forms that can greatly benefit a patient. For patients with poor liver functions, opiate and opiate-analog medications (such as Lortab™ and Percocet™) can be made without the Tylenol™, and can incorporate drugs such as promethazine (for nausea) or ibuprofen (for bone and muscle pain) with the pain medication. Our hospice patients have had their pain medications combined and formulated into liquids, topical gels and suppositories to better aid and comfort them.

Many professional and collegiate sports teams have physicians that incorporate compounded topical medications into their pain-management therapeutics. With a qualified compounding pharmacy and a knowledgeable physician, today's women can take advantage of the same medications, allowing them to keep up with their more active life-style.

Thomas Slaughter, Pharm. D. holds a Doctorate of Pharmacy from Mercer University. With state of the art equipment, Mulberry Pharmacy can formulate a creative compound to maximize therapeutic outcomes. You may contact him at the Mulberry Pharmacy, 1009 Church Ave, 863.943.1203.