General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Aging and Cerebral Palsy

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Common Conditions in Older Adults with CP

- Contractures and worsened spasticity
- Neurogenic bowel and bladder
- Osteoarthritis – excessive joint wear and tear
- Poor dental hygiene
- Osteoporosis
- Pain
- GERD
Cerebral Palsy

- In all of its forms, CP is a lifelong condition that:
  - Affects the communication between the brain and the muscles
  - Causes a permanent state of uncoordinated movement and posturing (spasticity, hypotonia)
  - Likely results from an injury that causes a lack of oxygen to the brain (but often no exact cause can be found)
Secondary Conditions

There are secondary conditions that sometimes develop over time as a result of the CP, for example:

- Soft tissue contractures
- Degenerative arthritis (eventual loss of the cartilage of the joints)
- Hip dysplasia (abnormal formation of the hip socket)
- Foot deformities
## Cerebral Palsy: Sources of Pain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Specific sources of pain</th>
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| Orthopedic Pain                               | • Back  
• Hips  
• Lower extremities, foot  
*consistent sources of pain in nearly every study on pain in adults with CP  |
| Spine pain                                    | • Scoliosis  
• Spondylosis  
• Cervical stenosis                                                                                                                                   |
| Pain related to low BMD and fracture          | Adults with CP are at high risk of osteoporosis, particularly as mobility decreases with age                                                                 |
| Dental pain                                   | Lack of availability to preventative dental care leads to poor oral health                                                                               |
| GI pain                                       | • GERD  
• Constipation                                                                                                                                            |
Patella Alta

- “High riding” patella (knee cap)
- Affects mobility and leg strength
- Common in walking adults, especially those with spastic diplegia (affecting both legs)
- May develop from constant overloading of the knee while walking
- Painful to the touch
- May lead to stress fractures and dislocations

Source: www.clinicalgate.com/knee-3
Hip Dysplasia and Osteoarthritis

- Adults with CP are at higher risk of hip displacement
- Individuals most severely affected by their CP are at highest risk
- Over time, displacement or other chronic abnormalities in the hip joint can develop into painful premature arthritis leading to a loss of mobility later in life

Source: www.hipdysplasia.org
Foot and Ankle Deformities

- People with CP may also experience foot deformities that get worse over time.
- This makes it difficult to bear weight on the foot and ankles and leads to reduced mobility and pain.
- This may also lead to degenerative joint changes and progressive foot pain.

Source: www.nursing-help.com
Scoliosis

- Present in up to 60% of adults with CP
- More likely in adults who are not able to walk and who have spastic quadriplegia
- Typically experience pain from:
  - Soft tissue strain on the convex side
  - Degenerative changes on the concave side

Source: www.srs.org
Arthritis of the Spine

- Degenerative/arthritic changes in the spine related to wear and tear
- Prevalence in weight-bearing adults with CP ranges between 21-30%
- Causes pain and stiffness in the affected area
- Can cause nerve root impingement, which leads to pain and weakness

Source: www.laserspineinstitute.com
Cervical Stenosis

- Narrowing of the spinal canal in the neck
- Occurs with higher incidence in adults with CP and dystonia
- Symptoms can include neck pain, gait changes, change in muscle tone, loss of bladder control, weakness

Source: www.knowyourback.org
Additional Webinars on Aging with IDD

General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Understanding Age Related Changes
- The Role of Polypharmacy
- Identifying and Assessing Pain
- Behavior Related Changes and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Health Promotion and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Mobility and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Aging with Down Syndrome
- Aging and Cerebral Palsy

Dementia and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Introduction to Dementia and Aging with IDD
- Early Evaluation of Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease
- Stages of Alzheimer’s Disease
- Applying the Knowledge to Dementia Caregiving and Caregiver Support
- Caregiving in Action: Case Studies and Practical Tips
Additional Aging with IDD Resources

Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation & Research
http://shriver.umassmed.edu/cdder/aging_idd_education
Training produced by the Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation & Research (CDDER) on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

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