Intravenous acetaminophen is not recommended to relieve pain after surgery in patients who have their wisdom teeth extracted, according to a new study. However, this medication can be an additional resource for minimizing pain after surgery based on other studies indicating its effectiveness, researchers wrote in the study published in a recent issue of the Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery— the official journal of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS).

For the randomized, double-blind study, 72 patients diagnosed with partially erupted (partial bony) or not erupted (complete bony) impacted wisdom teeth were selected—35 were in the group that received acetaminophen, and the others were in the placebo group. Patients received a 15-minute infusion of acetaminophen or the placebo after surgery. The participants also received “standard-of-care” anesthetic drugs for wisdom teeth extraction and an inferior alveolar nerve block or local infiltration to numb the area. Using a 0-10 numerical rating scale, the participants were asked to rate their pain immediately after the procedure and then again by phone four and 24 hours after surgery.

Researchers found “no statistically significant” decrease in pain in patients who received IV acetaminophen immediately, four hours or 24 hours after surgery. Other studies have found that oral administration of acetaminophen resulted in significantly reduced pain after surgery, and IV acetaminophen and morphine are more effective than placebo for relieving pain, researchers wrote.

The full article can be accessed at www.joms.org/article/S0278-2391(18)30112-5/fulltext.