

**2026 Davee Foundation Lecture
and Resident Research Day**

Abstract

Megha Gangadhar, MD

Northwestern McGaw Family Medicine Residency at Lake Forest

Title: Closing the Gap: Iron Deficiency Management for Restless Legs Syndrome

Background: Family Medicine physicians frequently treat patients with Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS). Current American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) guidelines recommend assessing iron status in all patients with RLS and initiating iron supplementation when ferritin levels are ≤ 75 ng/mL. Physician awareness and adherence to these guidelines are essential for optimal management. This study evaluates physician adherence to AASM recommendations and current practices in the management of RLS.

Methods: We conducted a retrospective chart review of adult patients diagnosed with RLS at Northwestern Grayslake Family Medicine Clinic. Descriptive statistics were used to quantify rates of iron panel testing and iron supplementation. Of the 76 patients with documented RLS, we collected data including the presence of iron panel testing, the most recent ferritin level, and whether physicians initiated iron supplementation for ferritin levels ≤ 75 ng/mL. The primary outcome was the rate of iron panel testing in patients with RLS. The secondary outcome was the proportion of patients with iron deficiency (ferritin ≤ 75 ng/mL) who received guidance-concordant care and were appropriately treated with iron supplementation.

Results and Conclusions: Iron panels were ordered for 92.1% of patients with RLS, reflecting high adherence to diagnostic guidelines. However, among patients with ferritin ≤ 75 ng/mL, only 50% received iron supplementation, indicating a significant treatment gap.

These findings suggest that while most physicians appropriately assess iron levels in patients with RLS, there remains a gap in physician adherence to iron deficiency treatment guidelines in patients with RLS. Physician education will improve compliance with guideline-directed treatment and optimize the management of RLS in the Primary Care setting.