NHS

North of England
Cancer Network

Updated NECN Palliative and End of Life Care Guidelines for Cancer and Non-Cancer Patients

Including new guidance on the use of **morphine** as first-line parenteral strong opioid of choice

FAQ1: Why switch to morphine?

Why switch to morphine? 1/2

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- History
  - Diamorphine shortage 2004
- National picture
  - North-east outlier
  - National Delphi exercise, first-line strong opioid[3]

    1: Morphine

    2: Alfentanil

    3: Oxycodone

    4: Diamorphine

3. A. Dickman. Palliative Care Pharmacists Network Conference 2011.

Why switch to morphine? 2/2

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- Safety
  - Consistency within NECN
- Cost
  - NHS List Price (BNF, Sep 2011)
    - Morphine 10mg ampoule = £0.72
    - Diamorphine 5mg ampoule = £2.94
      - (+ Water for Injection £0.34)

FAQ2: What about those patients already prescribed diamorphine?

What about those patients already prescribed diamorphine?

- DON'T switch, continue the diamorphine
- Aim
  - Patients being switched from oral morphine to injectable preparation
  - New patients initiated on a strong opioid
  - New anticipatory prescribing
    - Hospital, home, nursing home, hospice

FAQ3: What date should the change to Morphine take place?

What date should the change to Morphine take place?

Tuesday May 1st 2012

FAQ4: What should I prescribe?

What should I prescribe?

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- Morphine ampoules
  - 10mg/ml, 15mg/ml, 20mg/ml, 30mg/ml (1ml & 2ml amps)
- For opioid naïve patients
  - Prescribe 2.5 – 5mg sc prn, up to hourly
- Conversion if on regular morphine
  - From oral morphine to subcutaneous morphine

    2 : 1
- PRN dose
  - 1/6th total daily dose of morphine

FAQ5: Is morphine compatible with other drugs in a CSCI?

Is morphine compatible with other drugs in a CSCI?

- Yes, always with…
  - Cyclizine
  - Metoclopramide
  - Levomepromazine
  - Hyoscine Hydrobromide
  - Hyoscine Butylbromide
  - Glycopyrronium
- Yes, but with exceptions…
  - Midazolam
    - Compatible at usual concentrations
  - Haloperidol
    - Compatible at lower concentrations

FAQ6: What's the maximum dose of morphine?

What's the maximum dose of morphine?

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- Rate limiting step
  - Max volume of a sub-cut stat dose is 2ml
    - 2ml volume of Morphine Sulphate = **60mg stat dose**
    - Stat dose ~1/6th total daily dose
      - » **60mg x 6 = 360mg/24 hr via CSCI**

- Doses above this, seek specialist advice as needed

FAQ7: What are the other key messages in the NECN palliative care guidelines?

What are the other key messages in the NECN palliative care guidelines?

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- New sections
  - Anxiety and depression
  - Diabetes in palliative care
  - EOL prescribing in patients with renal failure
- Updated
  - Opioid conversion table
- Reminder
  - Morphine is the first-line strong opioid of choice both ORALLY and parenterally

Any other questions?

Further help / advice!

- Local palliative care team

  Insert telephone number / email here

- Lynda Atter (NECN lecturer / practitioner)
  - Contact via: ann.bassom@necn.nhs.uk