John Taylor Hospice

Prescribing Algorithm

Morphine for pain relief in the dying phase

Version 4

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1.   Scope

This is for use by professionals in all healthcare settings caring for patients in pain during the dying phase: **Morphine sulphate SC.**

Please note there is also a DIAMORPHINE version of this algorithm

2.   Key points for consideration

- This algorithm should be considered in conjunction with other agreed guidance relating to the care of patients in the dying phase.
- If the patient is not in the dying phase then please consult the West Midlands Guidelines for symptom control in palliative care and follow the WHO analgesic ladder
- If the patient has a Fentanyl patch, please refer to 'C08 Guidance on the Prescribing and use of Transdermal Fentanyl Patches in the Dying Phase'
- Patients should be assessed for reversible causes of pain and discomfort, for example full bladder / constipation.
- If patients are not settling / comfortable after the given time period then further help can be sought from West Midlands Palliative Care Physicians Guidance http://wmpcg.co.uk/ alternatively contact the out of hour's doctor on call.

3. Prescribing Algorithm for Pain in the DYING PHASE using MORPHINE SULPHATE SC injection

Patient in Pain

Is patient already taking Oral Morphine?

Yes

1) Convert the daily oral dose of Morphine **including breakthrough** medication taken in the previous 24 hours to MORPHINE SULPHATE s/c via syringe driver
To do this divide the total daily dose of oral morphine by 2.
E.g. MST 30mg bd + 40mg of breakthrough doses in previous 24hrs = 100mg day / 2 = MORPHINE 50mg via s/c syringe driver in 24 hours

2) Prescribe as required breakthrough doses of MORPHINE SULPHATE which should be 1/6th of the 24 hour dose in the syringe driver

3) After 24 hours review medication

No

Prescribe anticipatory medication:

Morphine sulphate 2.5 – 5mg s/c as required

Patient's pain is controlled

Is patient already taking Oral Morphine?

Yes

1) To convert a patient from oral morphine to a 24 hour s/c infusion of MORPHINE divide the total daily dose of morphine by 2. E.g. MST 30mg bd = 60mg day/2 = MORPHINE 30mg via syringe driver in 24 hours

2) Prescribe as required breakthrough doses of MORPHINE SULPHATE which should be 1/6th of the 24 hour dose in the syringe driver

3) After 24 hours review medication

No

Prescribe anticipatory medication:

MORPHINE 2.5– 5mg s/c as required