The purpose of this evidence-based project was to:
• Determine whether an intermittent indwelling subcutaneous catheter (ISB) decreased end-of-life pain.
• To determine if timely pain management decreased patients' and their loved ones emotional distress.
• To determine if caregivers could be taught to administer subcutaneous medications in a home-setting.

EVIDENCE

• Although there is not a lot of evidence supporting the use of an ISB, this practice has proven effective in the hospice community. First used in England and Australia to palliate pain at end-of-life, it was not until the 1980’s that hospices in the United States considered an indwelling catheter as an alternative to the oral route. In doing so, there is data to support the use of an ISB at end of life. Few complications are reported.


The ISB proved to be an effective route to deliver subcutaneous opioids at end-of-life. Multiple opioids were used through the route to palliate pain. Pain was significantly decreased within the first 24 hours. The mean of pre and post FLACC scores were compared. The mean pre score was 4.11 on a scale of 0 to 10, and the mean post score was 16. The mean FLACC score decreased to 1.21 by day 1, .67 by day 2, and .62 by day 3. These findings are clinically significant in the hospice community where patients rely on hospice clinicians for timely effective pain management, which, in turn, decrease their loved ones distress by 50% in the first 24 hours.

5 out of the 30 caregivers that were trained were not able to administer medications as taught through an ISB.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to Laura Miller, President/CEO and Dr. Glenn Panzer, CMO of the Elizabeth Hospice for allowing me to implement this research. A thank you also to Petra Rea RN, Ann Marilt RN, Nannette Goldberg RN, Kathy Owens RN, Pauline Martinez LVN, Theresa Gallegos LVN, Angelica De La Torre LVN, Susan Poloway LCSW, Lisa Hazard and Samantha Hedy who served as the Subcutaneous Button Taskforce. All the staff at The Elizabeth Hospice for their commitment to using evidence base practice to better patient care, and Dr. Mary Jo Clark for her research expertise and support for this project.

Intermittent Subcutaneous Button At End-of-Life

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EVALUATION METHOD

Target Population: Patients with a prognosis of six months or less to live receiving end-of-life care by hospice.

The accessible population: Hospice Case Managers used these inclusion criteria to determine when an ISB was appropriate.
• Hospice patient in a home setting.
• With a caregiver overseeing their care.
• Contraindications to oral opioids.

Sample Size: 30 hospice patients received an ISB from August 2011 to March 2012.

Materials;
• A caregiver professional form was created and completed by every caregiver involved in the patient's care.
• Hospice nurses used the form to determine if caregivers could be taught to administer subcutaneous medication through an ISB.
• A caregiver training handbook was created and used by hospice nurses to educate caregivers on how to administer subcutaneous medications through an ISB.
• The hospice triage team used the same handbook to assist caregivers with ISB placement.

Design:
• Quasi-experimental time series design
• Pre-assessment of pain /MAR using the FLACC scale prior to insertion of an ISB.
• Implementation of an ISB.
• Post-assessment of pain /MAR using the FLACC scale.
• Evaluation at day 1, 2, 3 and one month on the same patient.

Subcutaneous Opioids Used:
• Morphine, Methadone, Dilaudid, and Fentanyl

RESULTS

The ISB proved to be an effective route to deliver subcutaneous opioids at end-of-life. Multiple opioids were used through the route to palliate pain. Pain was significantly decreased within the first 24 hours. The mean of pre and post FLACC scores were compared. The mean pre score was 4.11 on a scale of 0 to 10, and the mean post score was 16. The mean FLACC score decreased to 1.21 by day 1, .67 by day 2, and .62 by day 3. These findings are clinically significant in the hospice community where patients rely on hospice clinicians for timely effective pain management, which, in turn, decrease their loved ones distress by 50% in the first 24 hours.

5 out of the 30 caregivers that were trained were not able to administer medications as taught through an ISB.

APPLICATIONS/IMPLICATIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE

This Evidence-based project determined:
• Patients experienced timely effective pain management with use of an ISB at end of life.
• Few to no complications occurred.
• Caregivers administered medications as taught. Some preferred this method over the oral route.
• Caregivers reported patients experienced a quality death.
• ISB prevented transfer of patients to inpatient facilities for severe symptom management.

Implications for Nursing Practice::
• Advance care planning for ISB is needed on admission to hospice, to decrease fear related to use, empower patients to make end-of-life disease-related decisions, and prepare caregivers for medication administration.

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE

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