

COMMONLY USED DRUGS IN PALLIATIVE CARE

Arya Ashok*, Jeny Samuel, Boby Johns George, Noby Thomas and Betty Carla

St. Joseph's College of Pharmacy, Cherthala, Kerala, India.

ABSTRACT

The development of palliative care medicine in units in India has been impressive in the last few years. A total of 15 patients were documented for a period of three months. This study investigates commonly used drugs in palliative care unit. The study was conducted at a tertiary care hospital in Kerala, India. Patients were included randomly. It was a retrospective study. The inclusion criteria were all patients in palliative care unit. Geriatrics not in palliative care unit were excluded. The most commonly used classes of drugs were opioids, NSAIDs, laxatives, sedatives, anxiolytics, antidepressants, antiemetics, corticosteroids, diuretics. These classes made up for 72 percentage of all of prescriptions in palliative care units. The substances used most frequently were morphine and derivatives of NSAIDs. Drug treatment was related to age, sex and functional status of patient. From this study it was found that most common disease conditions in palliative care unit was various cancers and osteoporosis.

Keywords: Palliative care, opioids, NSAIDs.

INTRODUCTION

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual. Aim of this study is to find out the commonly used drugs in palliative care. Some drug categories (eg, analgesics, anticoagulants, antihypertensives, antiparkinsonian drugs, diuretics, hypoglycemic drugs, psychoactive drugs) pose special risks for elderly patients. Some drugs, although reasonable for use in younger adults, are so risky they should be considered inappropriate for the elderly, and scope of this study is monitoring and reducing adverse drug reactions.¹⁻⁵

OBJECTIVE & METHODOLOGY

Objective

1. To find out the relationship between age, sex, different disease conditions and functional status in palliative care unit.
2. To find out the commonly used drugs in palliative care unit.

Methodology

1. Study design: Randomized controlled trial
2. Study settings: Palliative care department, tertiary care hospital, Kerala, India
3. Study period : Three months.
4. Study population: Geriatrics in palliative care unit
5. Inclusion criteria : All geriatric patients in palliative care unit
6. Exclusion criteria: Geriatrics not in palliative care unit.

Data collection

- Method of randomization.
- Study was administered by chief investigator
- Geriatric patients of inpatient was identified
- Consent from hospital authority was obtained
- Case sheets and medication charts were collected

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

15 patients were screened in the palliative care unit and it was found that

- The average age for patients in the palliative care unit is 68 years
- Male patients are more than that of female patients in palliative care unit.
- Patients who are living in urban area more in number in the palliative care unit.
- The average duration of time the patients are treated in the palliative care unit is 3 years
- The cancer patient predominates in the palliative care unit.
- Analgesics and antipsychotics are most commonly used drugs in palliative care unit.

CONCLUSION**Limitations of study**

- Time period was limited. Hence the different adverse reactions relating to the various drugs used could not be studied.
- The number of patients was limited and more studies are needed to draw conclusions about the level of harm in palliative care.

From the study "commonly used drugs in palliative care" it was found that

- Opioid analgesics like morphine and non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs were used more commonly.
- The most common cause for palliative care was found to be various forms of cancers.
- Male patient as above the age of 68 years were more in number than female patients in the palliative care department.
- The second most common condition treated is osteoporosis.
- Schizophrenia, diabetes mellitus and Parkinsonism are also found.
- Patients who lived in urban areas were more in number.

Table 1: Details of Data Collected Are Given Below

PATIENT	AGE	SEX	PLACE	DURATION	DISEASE	DRUGS
PATIENT 1	84	F	A	B	F	C,D1,A,B,D3,I,
PATIENT 2	45	F	A	C	A	D4,C,L,M,N,O,P
PATIENT 3	66	M	A	B	A	D4,A,E,N
PATIENT 4	63	M	A	B	G,E	E,S,D1,B,A,D3
PATIENT 5	68	F	A	B	A	A,G,D2,D4,B
PATIENT 6	80	F	A	B	D,E	E,J,B,D1
PATIENT 7	56	M	B	B	A	A,D4,Q,R
PATIENT 8	64	M	A	B	B	D1,J,D3,K
PATIENT 9	55	M	B	B	E,H	D2,S,T,B,T
PATIENT 10	81	M	A	A	C	F,G,
PATIENT 11	92	M	A	A	A	A,B,D3,
PATIENT 12	70	M	A	A	C	F,G,
PATIENT 13	68	M	A	B	F	C,D1,A,B,
PATIENT 14	65	M	R	B	B	D1,J,D3,
PATIENT 15	68	M	U	B	B,D,E	E,J,B,

DATA CODES

- sex-
male-m
female-f, place-urban-a .rural-b
- duration-
more than 5 yrs-a
Less than 2 yrs – b, 3 yrs -c
- drugs-analgesics-a, anxiolytics, sedatives, antidepressants, hypnotics-b, antibacterial agents-c, antihistamines-d1, bronchodilators-d2, laxatives-d3, vitamins-d4, calcium channel blockers-e, Antipsychotics-f, Antiulcer drugs-g, anti cancer-h, anti inflammatory agents-l, antimicrobial agents-j, antifungal drugs-k, cardiac glycoside-l, antidiabetics-m, diuretics-n, anti estrogenic compound-o, anticoagulant-p, adrenergic blocker-q, antimuscarinic agent-r, antihypertensive-s, antiepileptic drug-t

Table 2: Comparison of Patients Based on Age

Age in yrs	Frequency	Percent
45	1	6.7 %
55	1	6.7 %
56	1	6.7 %
63	1	6.7 %
64	1	6.7 %
65	1	6.7 %
66	1	6.7 %
68	3	20.0 %
70	1	6.7 %
80	1	6.7 %
81	1	6.7 %
84	1	6.7 %
92	1	6.7 %
Total	15	100 %

From the above table we can concluded that the age for patients in the palliative care unit is 68 years.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics – Age of samples

Number of samples	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
15	45 yrs	92 yrs	68.33 yrs	12.08

Table 4: Comparison of Patients Based on Place of Living

Place of living	Frequency	Percent
Urban	12	80 %
Rural	3	20 %
Total	15	100 %

From the above table we can concluded that patients who are living in urban areas are more in number in the palliative care unit.

Table 5: Comparison of Patients Based on Disease Conditions

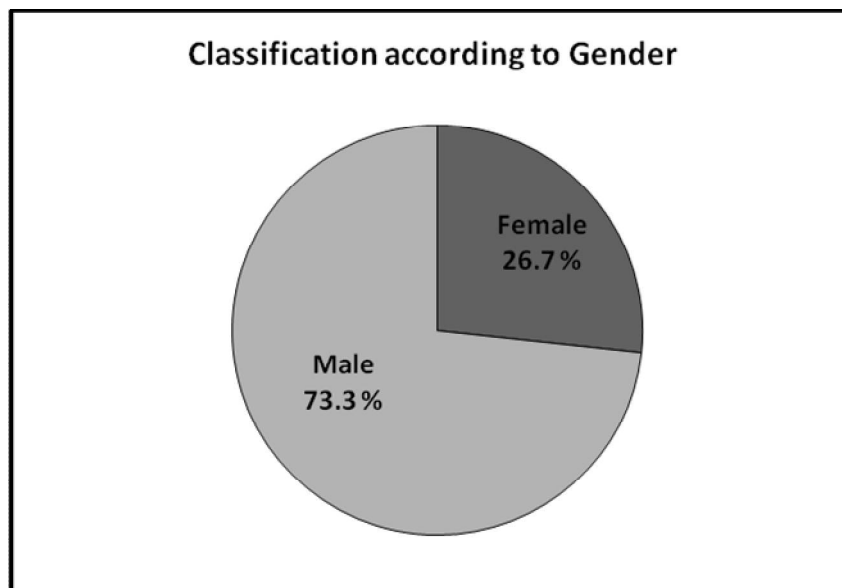
Disease	Frequency	Percent
A(cancer)	5	33.3
B(osteoporosis)	2	13.3
BDE(D-DM)	1	6.7
C(Schizophrenia)	2	13.3
DE(E-hypertension)	1	6.7
EH(H-epilepsy)	1	6.7
F(ulcer)	2	13.3
GE(G-parkinsonism)	1	6.7
Total	15	100 %

The table above shows that cancer patient predominate in the palliative care unit.

Table 6: Comparison of Patients Based on Drugs Used

Drugs	Frequency	Percent
Analgesics, Anxiolytics, sedatives, antidepressants, Hypnotics, Laxatives	1	6.7 %
Analgesics, Vitamins Adrenergic blocker, Anti-muscarinic agent	1	6.7 %
Analgesics, Anxiolytics, sedatives, antidepressants, Hypnotics, Bronchodilators, Vitamins	1	6.7 %
Analgesics, Anxiolytics, sedatives, antidepressants, Hypnotics, Anti-bacterial agents, Anti-histamines	1	6.7 %
Analgesics, Anxiolytics, sedatives, antidepressants, Hypnotics, Anti-bacterial agents, Anti-histamines, Laxatives, Anti-inflammatory agents	1	6.7 %
Anti-histamines, Laxatives, Anti-microbial agents	1	6.7 %
Anti-histamines, Laxatives Anti-microbial agents, Anti-fungal drugs	1	6.7 %
Anxiolytics, sedatives, antidepressants, Hypnotics, Bronchodilators Anti-hypertensive, Anti-epileptic drug	1	6.7 %
Analgesics, Calcium channel blockers Vitamins, Diuretics	1	6.7 %
Antibacterial agents, Vitamins Cardiac glycoside, Anti-diabetics, Diuretics, Anti-estrogenic compound, Anti-coagulant	1	6.7 %
Anxiolytics, sedatives, antidepressants, Hypnotics, Calcium channel blockers Anti-microbial agents	1	6.7 %
Anxiolytics, sedatives, antidepressants, Hypnotics , Calcium channel blockers Anti-microbial agents , Anti-histamines	1	6.7 %
Analgesics, Anxiolytics, sedatives, antidepressants, Hypnotics, Calcium channel blockers, Anti-histamines, Laxatives, Anti-hypertensive	1	6.7 %
Antipsychotics, Anti-ulcer drugs	2	13.3 %
Total	15	100 %

The above table shows that analgesics and antipsychotics are most commonly used drugs in palliative care unit.

**Fig. 1: Comparison of Patients Based on Gender**

From above pie diagram it was found that male patients are more than female in palliative care.

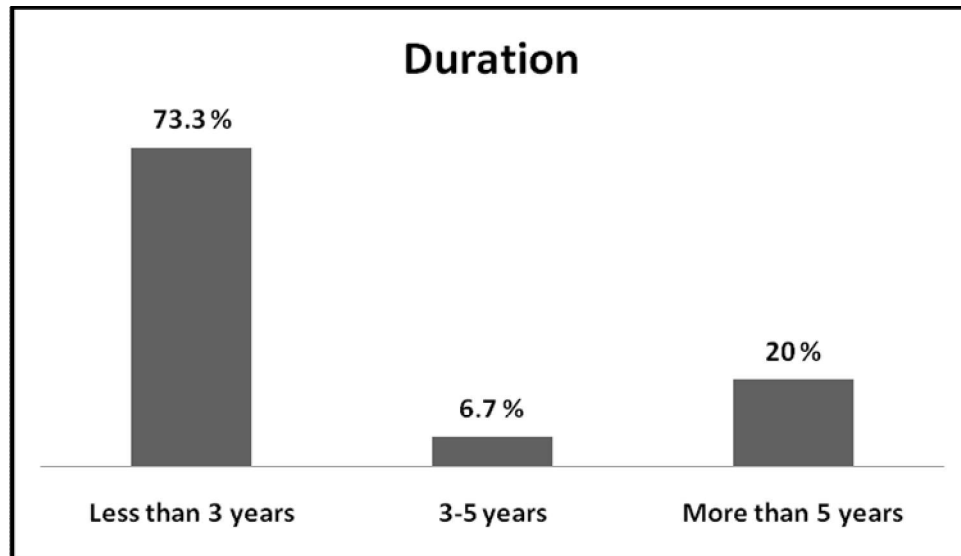


Fig. 2: Comparison of Patients Based on Duration Of Admission

The above bar diagram identifies that average durations of time the patients are treated in the palliative care units 3 years.

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