Adult Policy for Strong Opioid Dosing (Acute Pain) – Intermittent Oral and Subcutaneous Management

Contents
Policy/Purpose ......................................................................................................................... 1
Scope ....................................................................................................................................... 1
Associated documents .......................................................................................................... 1
Requirements for prescribing/administering opioid ............................................................... 2
Patient Risk Factors .............................................................................................................. 2
Oral dosing ........................................................................................................................... 3
Subcutaneous dosing ............................................................................................................. 4
Observations and Monitoring for both modalities (oral and sub cut) ...................................... 5
Baseline observations .......................................................................................................... 5
Observation criteria for administration ............................................................................... 5
Monitoring ............................................................................................................................ 5
Adverse Effects/Precautions ............................................................................................... 5
Measurement and Evaluation .............................................................................................. 6
References ............................................................................................................................ 6

Policy/Purpose
To ensure safe administration of opioids the following policy must be adhered to

Scope
CDHB inpatient services
Registered Nurses/Midwives, Approved persons
Prescribers/Medical practitioners

Associated documents
- Adult guidelines for intermittent opioid administration lanyard ref. 210
- Drug Treatment Sheet/MedChart
- Notes on Injectable Drugs

The latest version of this document is available on the CDHB intranet/website only. Printed copies may not reflect the most recent updates.
Requirements for prescribing/administering opioid

Before opioid administration, ensure that simple analgesics are being administered e.g. paracetamol, NSAIDS (if not contraindicated).

The recommended opioid is morphine, unless contraindicated e.g. known allergy or renal impairment.

- The RN/RM/RMO must be familiar with where naloxone is stored on the ward.
- The patient/family/whanau should be briefed on the benefits and risks of opioids, and be given education on adverse effects.
- Intermittent opioids should only be given by one route at any time. In situations of severe acute pain, intravenous administration may be more appropriate.

Please Note:

- Patients who are on regular opioids on admission (i.e. for cancer or chronic pain) are likely to need an individualised analgesic regime with the appropriate teams’ assistance e.g. Palliative Care Team and/or the Acute Pain Management Service in your facility or contact the patients RMO/SHO.
- For Burwood patients, if assistance is still required, contact the Burwood APMS or the on call RMO/SHO.
- For Ashburton patients, if assistance is required, contact the patients RMO/SHO in the first instance.

Patient Risk Factors

- Respiratory disease including obstructive sleep apnoea
- Frailty
- Receiving other sedative medication(s)
- Impaired renal function, particularly in the elderly
- Central Nervous System depression
- Raised intracranial pressure
- Bradycardia arrhythmias
- Impaired liver function

**Oral dosing**

Morphine is the recommended drug of choice for oral dosing unless there is a contraindication for its use.

**Recommended dosing according to age**

These doses are a guide for the use of Immediate Release (IR) morphine and oxycodone in acute pain. Use clinical judgement when prescribing.

**Considerations.**

- Initial dosing – for the opioid naïve patient, begin at the lower end of the dose range.
- Age is the best dose predictor. Lower doses are usually required with increasing age.
- Renal impairment – morphine may be inappropriate. Consider a longer dosing interval.
- Weight – dose adjustment may be required at extremes of body weight. Eg underweight patients may require less opioid, overweight patients may require more opioid.
- General physical condition – less opioid is usually required if frail or poor general condition.
- Pre-existing opioid use – opioid tolerance occurs with long term opioids, larger doses are often required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morphine Oral <em>(1st line)</em></th>
<th>Oxycodone Oral* (2nd line)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Suggested dose every two hours PRN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 39</td>
<td>10 - 30 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 59</td>
<td>10 - 20 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>5 - 15 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 85</td>
<td>5 - 10 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>2.5 - 5 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*immediate release.
Please note: The total morphine/oxycodone dose in the 24 hours following any dose will be limited to 8 times the upper dose of the prescribed range.

Subcutaneous dosing

Considerations

- Initial dosing – for the opioid naïve patient, begin at the lower end of the dose range.
- Age is the best dose predictor. Lower doses are usually required with increasing age.
- Renal impairment – morphine may be inappropriate. Consider a longer dosing interval.
- Weight – dose adjustment may be required at extremes of body weight. Eg underweight patients may require less opioid, overweight patients may require more opioid.
- General physical condition – less opioid is usually required if frail or poor general condition.
- Pre-existing opioid use – opioid tolerance occurs with long term opioids, larger doses are often required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morphine Subcutaneous</th>
<th>Fentanyl Subcutaneous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td><strong>Suggested dose every two hours PRN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 39</td>
<td>5 – 10 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 59</td>
<td>4 – 7.5 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>2.5 – 5 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 85</td>
<td>1.5 – 3 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>1 – 2 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: The total morphine/fentanyl dose in the 24 hours following any dose will be limited to 8 times the upper dose of the prescribed range.
Observations and Monitoring for both modalities (oral and sub cut)

Baseline observations

Document baseline observations to inform a NZ EWS and the patient's sedation score, pain score on the Adult Observation Chart/Patient Track.

Observation criteria for administration

All of the following observation criteria must be met before the patient receives any opioid.

- Respiratory rate at or above 12 respirations per minute
- Alert or Visual stimulus (AVPU scale)
- Sedation score of 0 or 1

Calculate and document a NZ EWS, and action as per NZ EWS management pathway.

Monitoring

Post administration assessment and observations will be performed and documented at

- One hour post administration of the oral/sub cut opioid.
- When clinically indicated due to concerns.
- These observations must include sedation level, respiratory rate, and pain score.

Adverse Effects/Precautions

- Respiratory depression (Respiratory rate of less than 9 bpm is a potentially life threatening adverse effect.)
- Sedation score of 2 or more.
- Heart rate less than 50 beats per minute.
- Hypotension- blood pressure of less than 100mmHg systolic or drop of greater than 20mmHg systolic BP.
- Oxygen saturations below 94% with supplementary oxygen.
- Utilise Naloxone and Oxygen as prescribed
- Where treatment is required for adverse effects manage accordingly and document adverse effect, treatment and outcome.
Measurement and Evaluation

- Acute Pain Management Service (APMS) review of individual Patients
- Incident management proces

References

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and Faculty of Pain Medicine