TRANSITIONAL PAIN SERVICE: OPIOID WEANING IN OPIOID-NAÏVE PATIENTS AND PATIENTS ON PRE-OPERATIVE OPIOIDS

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INTRODUCTION / AIM

The aims of this study are to determine the percentage of patients, managed by the Toronto General Transitional Pain Service (TPS), who were weaned from their postoperative opioid-based medications, and to report the use of adjuvant medications in facilitating weaning among opioid-naïve patients and patients on pre-operative opioids.

METHODS

A retrospective cohort study was conducted with surgical patients (n=139, aged 51.3±14.3 years) enrolled in the TPS. The main outcome measure was opioid weaning, defined as patients who reduced their opioid use to zero from post-surgical discharge to their last recorded TPS visit. Medications used to treat pain and facilitate opioid-weaning were: gabapentin/pregabalin, duloxetine/venlafaxine, tramadol, cannabis, celecoxib, and acetaminophen.

RESULTS

By 3 months after surgery, 42% of previously opioid-naïve patients had discontinued opioid use with help from the TPS. Those who persisted on an opioid used a median of 17.5 mg/day (morphine equivalent (MEQ)). For TPS patients who were prior opioid-users, 20% had weaned from opioids by their last TPS visit; those who persisted used 77.5 mg/day MEQ. 64 of the total 139 patients (46%) remained on gabapentin/pregabalin at their last TPS visit. 5 of 19 patients (26%) on serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) were weaned from opioids by their last TPS visit. There were no associations between opioid weaning and tramadol, cannabis, celecoxib, or acetaminophen.

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSIONS

The TPS weaned 42% of opioid-naïve high-risk patients and 20% of pre-operative opioid users from their opioids by 3 months after surgery. Findings to guide treatment of complex post-surgical pain patients are expected as more data is collected.

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