

Implementation of a small, portable, opiate conversion guide for staff in an independent hospice



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Care
Compassion
Understanding

Benzodiazepine	Equivalent Diazepam Dose	Approximate SC dose over 24h
Diazepam	5mg Po/Pr	N/A
Clonazepam	0.25mg Po/Sc	1mg
Lorazepam	0.5mg Po	N/A
Nitrazepam	5mg Po	N/A
Temazepam	10mg Po	10mg
Midazolam	2.5mg Sc	N/A
Zopiclone	7.5mg Po	N/A

Oral 24h morphine dose mg/24h	Oral 24h Oxycodone dose mg/24h	Parenteral Alfentanil mg/24h	Fentanyl patch	Buprenorphine patch	
			Durogesic mcg/hr	Butrans mcg/hr	Transtec mcg/hr
12	6			5	
24	12			10	
30		1	12		
48				20	
60	30	2	25		
84					35
120	60	4	50		
126					52.5
168					70
180	90	6	75		
240	120	8	100		

Background

Confusion surrounding the differing ranges and potencies of opiates and benzodiazepines can result in under or overdosing, leading to inadequate control of symptoms or toxicities.

We observed that staff used differing opioid conversion guides and lacked confidence when converting between benzodiazepines.

Staff identified the need for a consistent approach when converting between different opioids or benzodiazepines using a guide that is accessible across all clinical settings.

Aims:

- Provide staff with a conversion table for opioids and benzodiazepines, which is evidence-based, cost-effective, easy to replicate and accessible across different clinical settings
- Standardise prescribing
- Reduce drug errors related to opioid and benzodiazepine prescribing, conversion and administration.

Results:

The charts are the size of the staff ID badge and can be attached to a lanyard to hang around the neck.

Conclusions:

- Unanimously positive feedback was received from staff following introduction of the conversion chart
- Staff valued the accessibility and usability of the chart in clinical practice
- Less experienced doctors were able to prescribe accurately, and nursing staff empowered to confirm doses prior to administration, using standardised guidance
- The lanyard-attached conversion chart has now been adopted by the local NHS trust
- It is too early following implementation to assess impact on drug errors, but there are plans to review this through the local Medicines Management Group.

For more information please contact Dr Catherine Gleeson at St Catherine's Hospice on cathygleeson@stch.org.uk.

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