

The GeriJournal



Volume 2, Number 2
February 2007

A publication of GeriatRx Pharmacy

Government Pharmacy

Many of our LTC facilities have received a notice from MOHLTC regarding Gov't Pharmacy (OGPMSS) supplied medications. The notice indicates that provider pharmacies will now have the ability to order certain OGPMS products directly.

This is good news for everyone. Facilities will be able to reduce their ordering responsibility and stock levels. LTC pharmacies will no longer have to pay for the OGPMS meds dispensed to their facilities in pouches.

This new system only affects tablets and capsules that appear in your pouches. You still must order all OGPMS liquids, eyedrops, ointments and suppositories from Gov't Pharmacy. You should keep a good supply of meds which are dosed on a prn basis (e.g. Senokot®, acetaminophen) on hand. A minimal amount of other tablet and capsule products should be retained so that they are readily available for new orders.



Groundhog Day

DRUG	EQUIVALENT DOSE		TYPICAL STARTING DOSE FOR AN OPIATE NAIVE RESIDENT	
	s.c.	oral	s.c	oral
Morphine Sulfate	10mg	20-30mg	2.5-5.0mg q4h	5mg q4h
Codeine Phosphate	120mg	200mg	N/A	15-30mg q4h
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid, Hydromorph Contin)	2mg	4mg	0.5-1mg q4h	0.5-1mg q4h
Oxycodone (Oxycontin, Oxy-IR, Percocet)	N/A	10-15mg	N/A	2.5-5mg q4h (1/2 to 1 tab Percocet)
Meperidine (Demerol)	75mg	300mg	25mg q4h	50mg q4h
Fentanyl Patch (Duragesic)	N/A		12.5µg/hr q3days	

Narcotic Dosing

A recent issue of the *ISMP Bulletin* (Volume 6, Issue 9) identified risks associated with incorrect dosing and administration of narcotic medications. In particular, examples where hydromorphone (Dilaudid®, Hydromorph-Contin®) was confused with morphine by physicians, pharmacists and nurses were cited. Since hydromorphone is roughly six times as potent as morphine, these errors caused harm in some instances, and several deaths have been reported.

In its *Bulletin*, ISMP has made many recommendations to prevent similar future tragedies. These include: adding brand name equivalents to Rx labels – as per GeriatRx policy, double checks prior to administration in the facility, and monitoring of level of consciousness and respirations by the attending nurse.

ISMP also recommends that all staff dealing with narcotics familiarize themselves with the relative potencies of different agents and typical starting

doses of these drugs in opiate naïve residents. I have provided a chart (see *Dosing Equivalents Table* above) outlining these values for the narcotics which are used most frequently in our LTC and retirement facilities.

Insulin Pen Needles

Needles for Novolin pens are available in both 6 and 8 mm lengths. The 8 mm needles can penetrate through the subcutaneous layer into underlying tissue, potentially resulting in unwanted intramuscular injections.

Since the 6 mm needles may be used safely in both obese and frail residents, they are preferred. Consequently, we will send the 6 mm length for all pen needle reorders. This will ensure that the longer needles are not used inappropriately for any of your lean or frail residents.

Prepared by Randy Goodman
Certified Geriatric Pharmacist



Groundhog Day