

The GeriJournal

Volume 10, Number 2

February 2015

A publication of GeriatRx Pharmacy



Vitamin D and Stroke

The vitamin D bubble has yet to burst, and we are now at the point where virtually every resident takes this supplement. The latest positive study (*International Stroke Conference - ISC 2015*) shows a correlation between vitamin D status and stroke severity.

In this observational study, the charts of 96 patients admitted to a Massachusetts hospital for embolic stroke were reviewed. The volume of the infarct area damaged by the blockage was measured by MRI. Lower vitamin D levels corresponded to larger infarct size. In fact, patients with 25-OH-D3 levels below 75 nmol/L (deficient) had infarct volumes twice as large (17ml vs. 8ml) as those of the non-vitamin D deficient patients. In patients who had vitamin D levels measured within two weeks of the stroke, deficiency correlated to a four-fold increase in infarct size!

Functional loss carried a similar relationship to 25-OH-D3 levels. For every 25 nmol/L reduction in serum level, Modified Rankin Scale

score doubled, indicating greater neurologic disability.

Since this study was done retrospectively, we cannot say that correcting vitamin D deficiency would reduce infarct volume and subsequent disability. It would seem prudent, however, to ensure our residents are not vitamin D deficient, knowing that adequate levels also have additional proven benefits.

Tamiflu Trouble

Unfortunately, we have become more experienced with Tamiflu® than we would have liked this year. With the large numbers of both staff and residents consuming this drug, inevitable side effects and some allergies have been reported. The most prominent adverse effect has been nausea. For some, this was an inconvenience, but for others it made the medication absolutely intolerable.

Some individuals also showed signs of allergic reaction, with rash as the usual presentation. More severe symptoms are possible, though true allergies are seen quite infrequently.

I believe that we may not have been informed of all instances of intolerance or allergy. Please contact GeriatRx with any such reports, so we can ensure our resident files are up to date and prevent untoward reactions in the future.

Narcotic Label News

At GeriatRx, we sympathize with our nurses, especially when dealing with the onerous documentation associated with controlled drugs. In order to ease the burden, we have created a new label that can be peeled off the narcotic card, box or bottle, and affixed directly into your *Narcotic Count Book*.

The label contains all information required to identify the resident, medication and quantity, and will provide a fast, legible solution to entering this data into the book. You should be seeing these labels on your controlled drugs within the next week or two. If you have any questions on how they should be used, please call the pharmacy or ask your Nurse Consultant or Pharmacist.

Fecal Incontinence Tx

An innovative new device has been developed to treat fecal incontinence (FI) in women. It is called the Eclipse System® and contains an inflatable balloon that is placed in the vagina. Balloon pressure augments sphincter control, reducing FI episodes by 50%. The device was described as comfortable by most women in the study, with a few reports of cramping, pain, discharge or urinary incontinence. Eclipse may offer a non-drug solution to this challenging problem.

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