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Subcutaneous infusions for comfort care patients

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Abstract

Over 75% of hospice cases fail to eliminate pain despite high quality hospice care (Herr et al., 2010). The purpose of this quality project was to improve pain management in end-of-life patients via subcutaneous medication administration. An orderset was created to include subcutaneous infusion medications using the collaborative efforts of pharmacy leadership and palliative medicine leadership. Patients requiring pain management who were under hospice or palliative care and, lost intravenous (IV) access, were considered for this quality improvement project. A total of eleven patients met project qualifications, but unfortunately, two patients passed away before receiving pain medications subcutaneously. Project findings demonstrated similar pain scores when comparing the subcutaneous to intravenous route in nine of eleven patients.