



GeriCare Transcript- How to manage pain?

Before we begin, watch the video on "How to assess pain" if you haven't already done so! Let's begin with the management of pain!

Timely management of pain is important as it affects patient's function, interpersonal interactions, mood, appetite, sleep and behaviour. Management of pain can be classified into pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions.

Let's start with non-pharmacological interventions. There are a few ways to provide non-pharmacological interventions.

Firstly, patient and family education. Not knowing what to expect can be stressful for patients and families. I am sure you feel the same way too. You can help to educate patient and family on their pain causes and pain relief measures, to better prepare them and lessen their anxiety.

Secondly, physical and sensory interventions. Help to position the patient, bring out the inner masseur in you and gently massage areas which are painful, and provide hot or cold packs to lessen patient's pain when indicated.

Thirdly, recognise or identify psychosocial factors influencing the pain experience. As we have learned from "Introduction to Pain", pain can exist in the form of physical, psychological, spiritual or social pain. A patient who struggles to accept his medical diagnosis might have a lower tolerance for pain. He may benefit from seeing a psychologist or counsellor for coping strategies and emotional support. Remember, different pain, different treatment!

Lastly, creative therapy such as music and art therapy can sometimes help to provide comfort, reduce anxiety and build resilience for palliative care patients. Ok now I am going to be playing Beethoven's Fur Elise for you. Please enjoy. Ahem... No I am just kidding I don't know how to play that. Moving on!

We will now look at some of the pharmacological ways to manage pain. The World Health Organisation Analgesic ladder recommends 3 principles.

- 1) By the clock, where medications are given regularly rather than on demand.

- 2) By the mouth, where medicine taken orally is preferred for ease of use. If oral administration is not possible, the least invasive route should be chosen. For example, sublingual or subcutaneous should be chosen over other routes such as intravenous or intramuscular injections. I am sure you would rather swallow a tablet than take an injection on your buttocks, right?

- 3) By the ladder, where you bring a ladder with you when you serve medications. Of course not! By the ladder simply means prompt administration of medications are given, guided by the World Health Organisation analgesic ladder. This ladder encourages administration of medications in the following order to control pain: non-opioids such as your NSAIDs and paracetamol followed by weak opioids such as tramadol and lastly, followed by strong opioids such as morphine or fentanyl.



Adjuvant medications such as anti-depressants, anticonvulsants or steroids can be given at any step to help with pain control as well. Just like how Ironman can save the day on his own, but sometimes he would need the Avengers. Get it?

In summary, pain can be managed through various interventions, both pharmacological and non-pharmacological methods. By helping patients manage their pain, it will improve their physical health and mental well-being.

References

1. Geziry AE, Toble Y, Kadhi FA, Pervaiz M, Nobani MA. Non-pharmacological pain management [Internet]. Qatar: IntechOpen; 2018. Pain management in special circumstances. Available from: <https://www.intechopen.com/books/pain-management-in-special-circumstances/non-pharmacological-pain-management>
2. World Health Organization (1996). Cancer pain relief: with a guide to opioid availability, 2nd ed. World Health Organization. Available from: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/37896>