

*[P-117D] Effect of educational efforts to reduce the use of meperidine in a Veterans Administration facility*

*Leslie, D. M., Patel, H., Rooney, R. J., VA Chicago Health Care System, 820 S. Damen Ave., Chicago, IL 60612, USA*

*The evaluation of pain management has become increasingly important with the addition of pain standards for the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Likewise, the veterans administration has recognized pain as the fifth vital sign. Meperidine is a narcotic analgesic with multiple actions similar to morphine. Meperidine is metabolized to normeperidine, a product with significant pharmacologic activity and one which may lead to central nervous system excitation upon accumulation. Current literature recommends that the use of meperidine be limited to the prevention of drug induced or blood product induced rigors and the treatment of post anesthesia shivering. As a result of usage reports in our institution, pharmacy service implemented a system change and developed educational efforts to reduce the use of meperidine for general pain management. This project will report on the effectiveness of these tools. The educational effort involved supplying health care providers with conversion information for alternative agents, educating housestaff on effective first line pain medications, and the formation of a pain management task force. A system change occurred with the removal of meperidine from Pyxis machines on medical floors. Usage reports indicated over 8000 units of meperidine were dispensed annually. A review of treatment indications suggested that over 60% of patients were receiving meperidine for general pain management. Following the implementation of this initiative there has been a significant reduction in meperidine use with no reported cases of use for general pain management. This system wide performance improvement initiative will enhance patient safety and promote rational analgesic use.*