

Improving patient comfort in time of distress: Management of pain in the pre-hospital setting

PROBLEM: Although not a cure to a medical emergency, relief from pain should be seen as a right, however it has too often not been given to patients in the pre-hospital care domain in Qatar.

AIM: Ensure all patients with a pain threshold of 5 or more over 10 are provided with appropriate analgesia by pre-hospital care providers

INTERVENTION:

- Introduction of new Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG) accompanied by a new training programme for our staff.
- Introduction of new analgesic drugs for Ambulance Paramedics and Critical care Paramedics.
- Use of a pain scale with pictures (removing language barrier) (Figure 1).
- Audits by Oscar supervisors to enforce pain scoring during Patient assessment.
- Reports of analgesia administration to patients with moderate to severe pain displayed in ambulance stations.

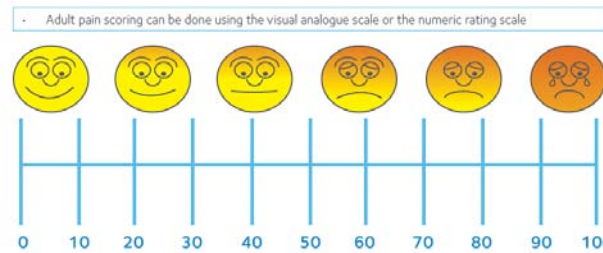


Figure 1: Visual pain scale used with patients.

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RESULTS:

Data from patient care record forms is monitored and analysed daily by the Quality Department. The graph below shows how the administration of pain relief therapy has changed over time when the patients' reported pain level reached our pre-determined threshold of 5 or more over 10.

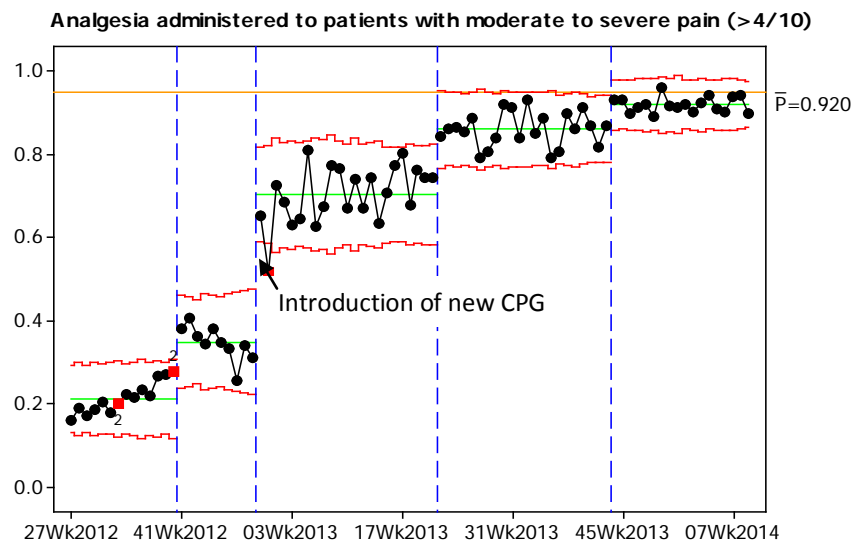


Figure 2: Compliance to pain relief medication administration guideline.

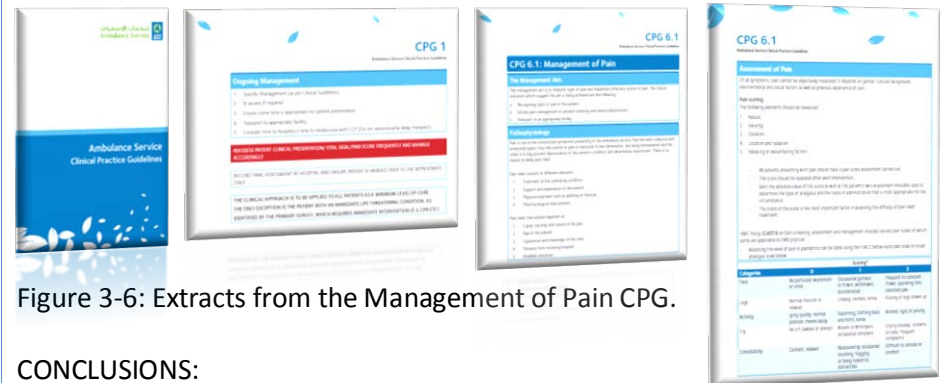


Figure 3-6: Extracts from the Management of Pain CPG.

CONCLUSIONS:

The use of analgesia for patients who reported experiencing moderate to severe pain has significantly improved in the last 18 months. Staff have gained confidence in the administration of new drugs that were previously outside of their scope of practice.

NEXT STEPS:

- Analgesia administration is one of the elements that will remain permanently audited by the Quality Department.
- Other initiatives guided by current best evidence-based practice which will improve patient care are being implemented in a similar manner.
- Monitoring is key to measuring performance improvement in patient care.