

Journal Watch Article by Dr Vincent Thai

Title: Alpha-2-Delta Ligands for Singletons (Hiccup) Treatment: 3 Case reports

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Abstract:

- 1) A quick review of medications used for the treatment of hiccups as illustrated by a short case series. It seems that the combination of an acid reducing drug and baclofen is one of the widely used regimes for hiccups.(Sometimes, baclofen is replaced with gabapentin)
- 2) Hiccups can be classified as transient (i.e. less than 1 day), acute (less than a week) and chronic (if more than a week).
- 3) All 3 cases were non-oncology patients :
 - a. case 1 was a 74 yr old man with cardiac problems including arrhythmias. He developed hiccups that were resistant to maxeran. However, it responded to a combination of omeprazole 20mg po daily and gabapentin 300mg po tid.
 - b. The 2nd case was a 69 yr old man with reflux esophagitis and diabetes and hypertension. He developed hiccups that were resistant to pantoprazole with baclofen, metoclopramide and domperidone. He finally responded to pantoprazole and pregabalin.
 - c. The 3rd case was a 60 yr old man with diabetes and its complications .His hiccups were not responding to omeprazole with metoclopramide and not even chlorpromazine. He finally responded to omeprazole and pregabalin.
- 4) It was expostulated that the use of acid reducing drugs reduces the input of gastrointestinal impulses to a putative hiccup centre and the use of gabapentin like medications decrease the neurotransmitter release and inhibit the hiccup reflex.

Strengths:

- 1- Good attempt to show that the gabapentin like medications can be helpful with hiccups with fairly dramatic response.
- 2-The article also had a quick short summary of the use of various drugs for hiccups.

Weakness:

- 1-Small case series

2-Non-cancer patients are assessed in this short case series and the results may not be applicable to Ontological Palliative patients.

3-Etiology of hiccups was not clearly defined

Relevance to Palliative Care:

Hiccups are not uncommon problems seen in palliative practice and to be able to have the additional option of gabapentin like medications to help with the hiccups is helpful. Use of chlorpromazine especially may have unacceptable side effect profile and the use of other agents may not be efficacious.