

Journal Watch - Palliative Sedation – April 2018

Article:

'Palliative sedation'? A retrospective cohort study on the use and labeling of continuously administered sedatives on a palliative care unit.

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Review:

Strengths: This study used objective criteria to assess the use of sedatives regardless of whatever labels the healthcare team might have used. This study also looked at which variables might influence labeling of the use of sedatives. The study also assessed more than just benzodiazepines.

Weaknesses: This was a retrospective study which has limits including missing medical records. In terms of sedation missing information includes level of sedation. The study was also conducted at a single centre and therefore may not be generalizable to other centres.

Relevance to Palliative Care: There are varying sedation practices in palliative care. This study aims to start to characterize and understand sedation practices and labeling of such practices in one centre. This paper is a starting point to which future research can look at defining different types of sedation and perhaps guidelines for palliative sedation.