

Journal Watch – Delirium – October 2017

Article:

Effect of Lorazepam with Haloperidol vs Haloperidol Alone on Agitated Delirium in Patients With Advanced Cancer Receiving Palliative Care

Hui D, Frisbee-Hume S, Wilson A, Dibaj SS, Nguyen T, De La Cruz M, Walker P, Zhukovsky DS, Delgado-Guay M, Vidal M, Epner D, Reddy A, Tanco K, Williams J, Hall S, Liu D, Hess K, Amin S, Breitbart W, Bruera E.

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Review:

Strengths: Well-designed trial – RCT with double blinding, clear intervention, applicable population (palliative cancer patients with delirium), and secondary measurements including adverse events.

Weaknesses: Study only used one benzodiazepine (lorazepam 3mg IV). Power of study insufficient to study adverse events, and secondary outcomes. While the population is relevant, still fairly specific and difficult to generalize outcomes different patient populations

Relevance to Palliative care: Delirium is a common concern in palliative care, and addressing the management of agitation can be very important for patient and caregiver comfort. This study highlights that the addition of a benzodiazepine to Haldol may be beneficial in treating agitation, but further study is required to evaluate for a wider range of doses and for a better understanding of adverse events.