Is Gabapentin Effective in Outpatient Opioid Detoxification?

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Background

- Opioid dependence/abuse is growing in the U.S.
- Results in increased mortality & psychological addictions.
- Symptoms of opioid withdrawal:
  - ↑ HR, BP, RR
  - nausea/vomiting, diarrhea
  - anxiety/irritability, restlessness
  - tremor or muscle spasm.
- Standard treatment of opioid withdrawal is symptom management.
- Current literature suggests gabapentin is effective in symptom management of alcohol and benzodiazepine withdrawal.
- The purpose of this project is to evaluate the efficacy of adding gabapentin to the standard symptomatic management of adult pain patient withdrawing form oral opioids.

Clinical Question

- Does the addition of gabapentin to standard opioid detoxification regimens improve symptoms of opioid detox in adult chronic pain patients?

Methods

- Integrated literature review completed
- Data Sources: Google Scholar, Up-to-date, Cochran Review, and CINAHL.
- Keywords: "opioid detoxification," "gabapentin in opioid detoxification," "opioid withdrawal and gabapentin."
- 8 articles retrieved, 3 excluded due to focus on benzodiazepine and alcohol withdrawal.
- 5 articles Included RCTs of outpatient/inpatient settings, gabapentin vs placebo/no add-on in the standard detox symptom treatment.

Inclusion Criteria:
- Adult chronic pain patients
- Standard detox +/- gabapentin
- Randomized control trials
- Published in last 10 years
- Written in English

Exclusion Criteria:
- Benzodiazepine of alcohol detox
- Patients treated with buprenorphine

Effect of add-on gabapentin on opioid withdrawal symptoms in opium-dependent patients

Results

- Gabapentin is effective for opioid withdrawal, hyperalgesia, and restlessness.
- Gabapentin improves symptomatic management, relieving psychological and physical symptoms of opioid withdrawal.
- Gabapentin add-on therapy reduces methadone consumption.

Discussion

- Many studies used methadone or suboxone add-on for symptomatic treatment, additional research should be performed to assess detox without an opioid.
- There was no standard dose of gabapentin used, 1600mg/day was more effective than 900mg/day.
- Studies reviewed included inpatient detox only.

Conclusion

- Current research indicates gabapentin is effective adjunct in withdrawal from benzodiazepines and alcohol, limited trials of gabapentin for opioid withdrawal had positive results.
- Currently, standard detox programs do not include gabapentin as a symptomatic adjunct therapy.
- Gabapentin is well tolerated, and given its success in treating withdrawal symptoms from benzodiazepines and alcohol, should be considered in opioid withdrawal symptom management.
- Additional research is warranted to establish gabapentin use in outpatient detox

References: Available upon request