The Imminently Dying Patient in the Emergency Department

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Dying?
The Dying Patient

- Identify
- Address
- Treat
Dying Trajectories

Disease Progression

Weeks

- Withdrawal
- Decrease energy
- Fatigue
- Decreased appetite
- Sleeping
- Weight loss
- Non-healing wounds
Days

- Confusion
- Inability to swallow/ no po intake
- Incontinence
- Decreased urine output
Hours

- Lethargy
  - Unresponsive
- Inability to swallow
  - Death rattle
  - Secretions
- Mottling
- Fever
- Cold extremities
- Irregular breathing
  - Agonal

http://www.modelmayhem.com/forums/post/881599
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZdq-bZ0cV8
http://housematesrcuk.blogspot.com
Recap: Common Pathway

Chronic Illness

Dementia

Cancer

Renal

COPD

CNS

CHF

Dyspnea

Weight loss

Coma

Fatigue

Confusion

Hours

Days

Weeks

Death

Wounds

Withdrawal

PO intake

↓ Urine

↓ PO intake
Next: What do I do?

Do you want us to do everything?

Goals of Care
You always do everything possible for the patient!
Goals of Care

SPIKES
- Setting
- Perception
- Invitation
- Knowledge
- Empathy
- Strategy & Summary

POLST

http://vitaltalk.org

http://www.nj.gov/health/advancedirective/polst.shtml
Treatment

- Symptom Control
  - Pain
  - Dyspnea
  - Nausea/Vomiting
  - Fatigue
  - Constipation
  - Appetite
  - Depression
Acute Pain

- **Opioids**
  - Morphine 0.1mg/kg
  - Dilaudid 1mg
  - Fentanyl 50mcg IV

- **NSAIDS**
  - Toradol 30mg IV or Ibuprofen 600mg po Q6H

- **Steroids**
  - Dexamethasone 4mg or 6mg po/IM/IV

Other causes

- Fever, acetaminophen 650mg pr/po
Dyspnea

- Opioids
  - Morphine 2mg IV per 30 minutes
- Oxygen –Nasal Cannula
- Anticholinergic
  - Atropine drops
  - Glycopyrrolate 0.1mg IV
  - Scopolamine patch
- Steroids
- Sit them up!
- Fan
Recap

Identify

- Dying Projectories: Dyspnea, irregular breathing, lethargy, pain.

Goals

- Remember: You will always do everything possible for the patient

Treatment

- Dyspnea: Low dose opioids, oxygen
Cure sometimes,
Treat often,
Comfort always
–Hippocrates


Links

- ACEP Palliative Care Section
  - http://www.acep.org/palliativesection/

- My Palliative Care Now
  - http://mypcnow.org

- POLST form

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