Management of RESPIRATORY TRACT SECRETIONS in the last days of life – ADULT

Assess patient in the last days of life at least every 4 hours: to allow existing and emerging symptoms to be detected, assessed and treated effectively

Assess respiratory tract secretions: exclude pulmonary oedema and if present, seek medical review

Instigate non-pharmacological measures e.g. reassure family, position semi-prone and on alternate sides to encourage drainage; AVOID suction

Give opioid as below and assess effectiveness NOTE: antisecretory medications may be ineffective or only partially effective

Patient IS DISTRESSED by respiratory tract secretions Patient does NOT have respiratory tract secretions Reassure family, with explanation of symptom and cause Reposition to encourage postural drainage Prescribe regular subcut antisecretory GLYCOPYRROLATE / GLYCOPYRRONIUM 0.2mg subcut regularly 2 hourly 1.2mg subcut in 24 hr syringe driver HYOSCINE BUTYLBROMIDE (Buscopan) 20mg subcut regularly 4 hourly 120mg subcut in 24 hr syringe driver Pre-emptively prescribe PRN subcut antisecretory Also prescribe PRN subcut antisecretory GLYCOPYRROLATE / GLYCOPURRONIUM GLYCOPYRROLATE / GLYCOPYRRONIUM 0.2mg subcut 2 hourly PRN 0.2mg subcut 2 hourly PRN max PRN dose in 24hrs = 1.2mg (6 PRN doses) max PRN dose in 24hrs = 1.2mg (6 PRN doses) HYOSCINE BUTYLBROMIDE (Buscopan) HYOSCINE BUTYLBROMIDE (Buscopan) 20mg subcut 2 hourly PRN 20mg subcut 2 hourly PRN max PRN dose in 24hrs = 120mg (6 PRN doses) max PRN dose in 24hrs = 120mg (6 PRN doses) Assess response and initiate further intervention if symptoms remain uncontrolled Assess response and initiate further intervention if symptoms remain uncontrolled Review symptom control at least daily, or more often if symptoms uncontrolled Review symptom control at least daily Reassure family, explain symptom and reposition to encourage postural drainage If 3 or more effective PRN doses required in previous 24 hours, prescribe regular antisecretory Seek advice from local Specialist Palliative Care Team if symptoms remain uncontrolled

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