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What Are You Prescribing?

In this column Dr. Richard Allen reviews a commonly prescribed medication that may provide little benefit to patients in a terminal state — and may possibly cause harm. Please note that these recommendations are meant only as a guide.

Donepezil

This drug and others used to treat dementia may not be appropriate for patients with a hospice diagnosis of dementia, and probably not warranted for dementia patients with other hospice-related diagnoses. Donepezil is indicated for mild to moderate Alzheimer's dementia, specifically patients with a FAST score less than seven. One study of 565 patients demonstrated no difference in institutionalization, debility, or decreased ADLs in patients treated with donepezil, and less than one point difference on a 30-point cognitive test. A far-reaching review of these medications stated that "treatment of dementia... can result in statistically significant but clinically marginal improvement in measures of cognition and global assessment of dementia." Common side effects include hypotension, syncope, nausea, and anorexia. Families take great hope in and pay high costs for dementia treatment, but statistically the medicines are not helping their loved ones, and are clearly not part of comfort care.

Information comes from an NHPCO NewsLine article: 10 Drugs to Reconsider written by Dr. Richard Allen.

Feedback? Questions? Want to receive an E-Newsletter Instead?

Please contact Alyssa Needham at (970) 683-4921
or e-mail ANeedham@HopeWestCO.org.

Clinical News

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HopeWest

(866) 310-8900
HopeWestCO.org

Profoundly
changing the way
our community
experiences serious
illness and grief –
one family at a time.



Inside this Issue:

Complex Case Presentation Helps Clinicians Provide the Best Care to Their Patients

Clinicians attend conference to discuss complex health cases facing our local health care providers to collaboratively work towards providing the best patient care possible.

Don't Miss the next 'Being Mortal' Screening

Join us on December 5 for a screening of 'Being Mortal'. 'Being Mortal' delves into the hopes of patients and families facing terminal illness. It follows a surgeon, Dr. Atul Gawande, as he shares stories from the people and families he encounters.

Internationally Renowned Palliative Care Physicians Visit Western Colorado for Conference

More than 200 regional healthcare professionals attended a series of Palliative Medicine Conferences hosted in Grand Junction, Montrose and Placerville.



Thank You for Helping Us Reach 20,000 Patients

At HopeWest we have now served more than 20,000 patients in our hospice program since 1993. Thank you for ensuring the quality of life for those many patients and their families through your referrals.

Complex Case Presentation Helps Clinicians Provide Best Patient Care

Physicians, nurses, chaplains and social workers of HopeWest, Montrose Memorial Hospital and other healthcare organizations filled the conference rooms of their respective facilities during a Complex Case Presentation video-conference earlier this year.

The purpose of the video-conference was to collaborate on how best to help members of the community that are seriously ill and present the most complex health cases to our local healthcare providers.

Participants had the opportunity to present cases of people they are currently working with or people they've worked with in the past and what challenges they had while caring for them. These cases were then discussed as a group and commented upon by a panel of experts including Dr. David West, VP of Medical Affairs at HopeWest, Dr. Charles F. von Gunten, VP of Medical Affairs at Hospice & Palliative Medicine at OhioHealth, Dr. Frank Ferris, Executive Director of Palliative Medicine, Research and Education at OhioHealth, Dr. Crystal Owens, Chief Medical Officer at HopeWest, Dr. Robert Kilbourn, Medical Director of Oncology at San Juan Cancer Center and Dr. Bryan Giesel, Physician at Montrose Medicine and HopeWest



“We hope that by hosting these complex case presentations we can collaborate, bringing each of our strengths and experiences to the table, to learn how to best help the people in our community who are facing serious illness,” said Darleen White, Director of Medical Affairs and Palliative Care of HopeWest. “We appreciate the amazing relationships we have in the medical community throughout western Colorado that allow us to have these educational discussions to enhance the health and lives of those in our community.”

Healthcare Professional Educational Events You Do Not Want to Miss

Don't Miss the 'Being Mortal' Video Screening & Discussion

HopeWest is hosting a free screening and discussion of the PBS program 'Being Mortal'. 'Being Mortal' delves into the hopes of patients and families facing terminal illness. It follows a surgeon, Dr. Atul Gawande, as he shares stories from the people and families he encounters. When Dr. Gawande's own father gets cancer, his search for answers about how to best care for the dying becomes a personal quest.

December 5, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Martin Mortuary 550 North Avenue

All are invited - refreshments will be served

For more information contact

Mary at (970) 683-4927



Internationally Renowned Palliative Care Physicians Featured at Conference

More than 200 regional healthcare professionals attended a series of Palliative Medicine Conferences, the third set of conferences of its kind, hosted in Grand Junction, Montrose and Placerville and featuring internationally-renown palliative medicine pioneers.

The conference was held in November with the intent to enhance knowledge of treating patients for pain and symptom management across all disciplines of healthcare. More than 20 regional healthcare organizations have come together to sponsor this educational opportunity for local healthcare professionals.

Speakers included Dr. Charles F. von Gunten, Vice President of Medical Affairs and Hospice & Palliative Medicine and Dr. Frank Ferris, Executive Director of Palliative Medicine, Research & Education both of Ohio Health in Columbus, Ohio.

Building on content they have delivered in two prior conferences, Dr. von Gunten and Dr. Ferris covered the following points at the conference:

- Opioid pharmaceuticals, changing opioids and changing routes of administration & contrast different forms
- Physiology of normal bowel function and ways to treat constipation and bowel obstruction
- Distinguish Anorexia from cachexia and identify treatments
- Therapeutic wound care and managing wound pain
- “It’s the patient’s choice – what does this mean?” ethical practice standards

Palliative care is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. It focuses on providing patients with relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family.

“Not only do palliative practices increase the quality of care for individuals receiving medical services, it also reduces the costs of providing care,” said Darleen White, Vice President of Medical Services and Palliative Care at HopeWest. “This was a tremendous opportunity for local healthcare professionals to receive expert training in a location close to home. We have spearheaded the collaborative effort to bring these experts to western Colorado because we know enhancing knowledge on palliative care will benefit the individuals receiving care and healthcare organizations alike.”



Happenings

HopeWest Named Top 100 Best Places to Work

HopeWest has been recognized as one of Modern Healthcare’s Top 100 Best Places to Work in Healthcare nationwide, ranked number 54, among hundreds of organizations that participated across the country.

“The commitment we have to our mission of helping patients and families across the Western Slope is what drives our dedication to our employees and to creating a great place to work,” said Christy Whitney Borchard, President and CEO of HopeWest. “It’s very inspiring to be associated with other dynamic healthcare companies across the nation.”

Welcome Dr. Brown!

We are excited to have Dr. Brown joining us at HopeWest. Dr. Brown started with HopeWest this spring after a 20-year career working in Emergency Medicine. Her interest in hospice work stems in part from a desire to spend more quality time



with patients and their families. She graduated as a doctor from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in 1991 and completed Emergency Medicine Residency at Denver General Affiliated Residency Program in 1995. She is board certified in Emergency Medicine and served as the physician advisor for Mesa County EMS from 1996-2004 and assistant advisor from 2007-2015. Dr. Brown lives on a beautiful peach orchard and vineyard on East Orchard Mesa with husband Neil and her two dogs. They opened their own small winery in 2008 named Avant Vineyards. This “hobby gone wild” as well as her garden keeps her busy but she also enjoys hiking, traveling, cooking and cross-country skiing when time allows.