

A breakthrough in managing cancer pain in the Middle East

Breaking multiple barriers towards introducing implantable intrathecal devices

AlDiri, I. MD., Akbik, H. M

Background:

The goal of the study is introduce the cultural, and challenges we faced while introducing the intrathecal implantable device in the region, and how we overcame it.

Oral opioids has significant side effects, and complications when used in treating cancer patients especially with dose escalation, intrathecal analgesia may be an appropriate alternative treatment option for cancer pain.

Treatment of cancer patients in the Middle East region has always been a challenge, the majority of the cancer patients die in pain while suffering from cancer, due to several reasons, including and not limited to the lack of knowledge in treating cancer pain, Opioid stigma and cultural barriers.

Method:

Over 2 years 18 advanced cancer patients with uncontrolled pain on oral opioids agreed to undergo the intrathecal drug pump therapy.

Results

Cultural beliefs regarding insertion of foreign device in the body, the multiple decision makers in the one family, fear of the surgical procedure and its complication, and the misconception that surgery will worsen and accelerate disease progression. The lack of knowledge among medical professionals was as challenging.

Conclusion:

Cancer pain management has always been a challenge in the Middle East, in Kuwait , we were successful in removing some of those barriers, and managed to achieve some of our goals in minimizing the suffering of cancer patients, improving their quality of life and activity of daily living.