



17 March 2022

Vanessa Hille
Policy Officer Professional Documents
Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists
& the Faculty of Pain Medicine
profdocs@anzca.edu.au

Dear Vanessa,

Re: Choosing Wisely recommendation to Avoid routine prescription of slow-release opioids in the management of acute pain

About the New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists (NZSA)

The NZSA is a professional medical education society which represents over 750 anaesthetists in New Zealand. Our members include specialist anaesthetists in public and private practice, and trainee anaesthetists. Our key roles are advocacy, facilitating and promoting education, and strengthening networks of anaesthetists nationwide.

Overview

The NZSA welcomes the opportunity to submit on the above ANZCA Choosing Wisely recommendation even though it is not directly applicable to the New Zealand setting. We generally support the recommendation of avoiding SR opioids for the management of acute pain with some caveats detailed below.

Comments

In New Zealand there are several settings in which slow-release opioids are routinely prescribed in the acute setting, such as in obstetric units and post major joint replacements. There are some using IV methadone for major intracavity surgery, being more titratable compared to SR oral options, an option that has been the topic of several recent Evidence Based Perioperative Medicine (EBPOM) presentations.

People working in these settings find these strategies safe and effective, especially in the New Zealand setting where alternatives are very limited (the only atypical opioid available in New Zealand is Tramadol).

We would recommend this addition: "Avoid routine prescription of SR opioids for management of acute pain, except in certain acute settings where there is experience of the use of SR opioids and there are systems in place to monitor the outcomes." Or similar wording.

The submission states: "SR opioids are not TGA-approved for the treatment of acute pain." The Therapeutic Goods Agency is an Australian organisation; We have no such equivalent in New Zealand, although the MedSafe data sheets for the two commonly used SR opioids in New Zealand (M-Eslon and oxycontin) do not recommend use for acute perioperative pain in the first 24 hours.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We are happy to answer any questions if required.

Yours sincerely, ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheila', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Dr Sheila Hart
NZSA President