

The Use of Transdermal Buprenorphine to Manage Acute Pain in the Clinic

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Abstract

Objective

Transdermal buprenorphine is approved to manage chronic pain, but may be considered for acute pain management in the clinical setting, such as postoperative pain control.

Methods

The authors completed a literature search and created a narrative review with emphasis on clinical studies using transdermal buprenorphine to manage pain. Most of these studies involved the use of the buprenorphine patch for postoperative pain.

Results

Buprenorphine is an atypical but effective analgesic which has unique pharmacological properties. Offering good pain control and lower risk of respiratory depression, buprenorphine may be particularly suitable for older patients. Typically, a patch is applied before surgery and then left in place for one to seven days after surgery. The patch provides a consistent dose of analgesia and eliminates analgesic gaps, keeping typical opioid-associated side effects. Analgesia performed well and most patients reported good satisfaction.

Conclusion

Although not approved for use in acute pain management, transdermal buprenorphine may be a safe, effective postoperative analgesic that offers the benefits of consistent dosing, relative safety, and great patient satisfaction.

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Abstract

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