

Gauging Provider Attitudes and Awareness of Ketamine as an Analgesic

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Abstract

Background: Ketamine has been explored as an alternative analgesic for acute pain management, particularly in specific patient populations where other analgesics may play a limited role. Despite published guidelines supporting its use, clinical adoption appears to occur infrequently. This study aims to assess provider awareness, attitudes, and potential barriers to ketamine utilization for analgesia.

Methods: A survey was distributed to healthcare providers at OSF St. Francis, collecting demographic data and assessing familiarity with the 2018 consensus guidelines on ketamine infusions for acute pain. Likert-scale questions measured provider likelihood of prescribing ketamine in cases of sickle cell disease, opioid use disorder, and breakthrough cancer pain. Additional questions examined institutional barriers and interest in further education on ketamine use.

Results: Of the 22 responses collected, most respondents (38%) had been practicing five years or less. Most respondents were physicians (90%). Awareness of the 2018 guidelines was mixed, with 38% of respondents reporting familiarity, 33% unaware, and 24% aware but not having reviewed them. Institutional barriers to ketamine use included concerns about oversedation, stigma, and nursing staff discomfort with administration.

Conclusions: While guideline awareness does not appear to influence ketamine prescribing trends, institutional and educational barriers may contribute to its limited use. Future efforts should focus on provider and staff education to improve comfort with ketamine as an analgesic option.