

Prescribing Algorithm for Excessive Respiratory Secretions in the DYING PHASE

Version History

Version	Date	Summary of Change/Process
1.0	2008	Agreed by SPAGG
1.1	March 2011	Circulated to Jackie Dominey, John Speakman and Diana Webb
1.2	June 2011	Updated by John Speakman and circulated to SPAGG and Network Site Specific Group for reviewing
1.3	July 2011	Circulated to Supportive and Palliative Care Network Site Specific Group for final review and comments
1.4	18.07.11	With comments from Dr. Gill Hayes – for consideration by SPAGG
1.5	24.10.11	Minor amendments incorporated from John Speakman
2.0	02.11.11	Reviewed and Endorsed by Guidelines Sub Group

Date Approved by Network Governance	November 2011
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Date for Review	November 2014
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Scope

This algorithm is for use by professionals in all healthcare settings who are caring for patients with excess respiratory secretions in the dying phase.

Key Points

- Secretions are often more distressing to the family and carers than to the patient themselves. If the patient is not distressed careful explanation of this may avoid the need for drugs.
- It should be remembered that drug treatment does not reduce the quantity, or cause re-absorption of secretions already produced. It will only reduce the production of further secretions. Furthermore, drying up secretions will cause a dry mouth which some patients may find uncomfortable.
- If patients are not settling / comfortable after the given time period then further help can be sought from West Midlands Palliative Care Physicians Guidance or other Network guidelines found at the link below, alternatively contact the out of hours palliative care on call service.
<http://www.birminghamcancer.nhs.uk/staff/clinical-guidelines/supportive-and-palliative-care>
- If the patient is not in the dying phase then please consult the West Midlands Guidelines for symptom control in palliative care.


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- Contact details for supportive and palliative care can be found in the Network supportive and palliative care directory located here: <http://www.birminghamcancer.nhs.uk/staff/supportive-and-palliative-care/supportive-care>, or at the end of the referral guideline located here: <http://www.birminghamcancer.nhs.uk/staff/clinical-guidelines/supportive-and-palliative-care>

Approval Signatures

Pan Birmingham Cancer Network Governance Committee Chair

Name: Doug Wulff

Signature: 

Date: November 2011

Pan Birmingham Cancer Network Manager

Name: Karen Metcalf

Signature: 

Date: November 2011

Network Site Specific Group Clinical Chair

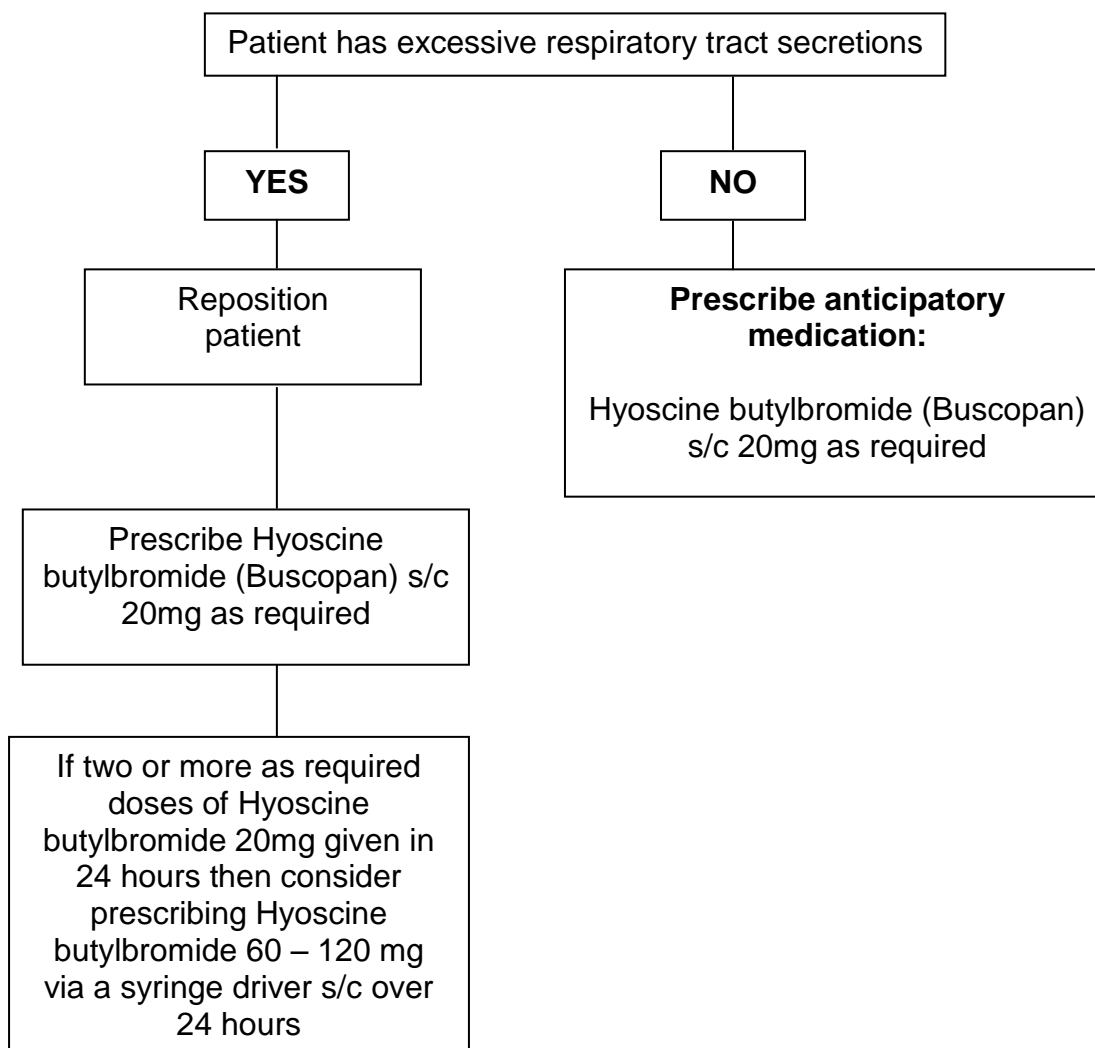
Name: John Speakman

Signature: 

Date: November 2011

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s/c = subcutaneous

Note: Alternative medication is available if buscopan is not effective. Please use the West Midlands Palliative Care Physicians Guidelines for the use of drugs in symptom control or contact your local specialist palliative care team for further advice.

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