



Association for
Palliative Medicine

Article of the Month

December 2017

Continuation of non-essential medications in actively dying hospitalised patients

Beverly Rosa Williams, Amos Bailey, Elizabeth Kvale, Neal Steil, Patricia S Goode, Richard E Kennedy and Kathryn L Burgio

This article reports the use of 11 non-essential medications in actively dying patients, using secondary data from the Best Practices for End-of-Life Care for Our Nation's Veterans trial. The electronic medical records of 5476 deceased patients were reviewed. The article reports that non-essential medications were administered to actively dying patients, but that interventions to enhance recognition of the dying phase facilitated the discontinuation of these medications.

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Shared decision-making at the end of life: A focus group study exploring the perceptions and experiences of multi-disciplinary healthcare professionals working in the home setting

Paula Brogan, Felicity Hasson and Sonja McIlpatrick

This qualitative article investigates the perceptions and experiences of a multi-disciplinary team with Shared Decision Making (SDM) at the end of life. The researchers interviewed 43 health and social care professionals who frequently engaged in home-based palliative care. The article reports that conceptual confusion, uncertainty of the process, and organisational issues all impede the process of SDM. The article concludes by highlighting the complexity of moving from the rhetoric of SDM to the reality at individual, process, and system levels.

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Prepared by Professor Paddy Stone, on behalf of the APM Science Committee