

Managing Cancer Pain: Male with Colon Cancer

This patient developed colon cancer at age 45. After surgery and radiation, the cancer continued to grow and became extremely painful for the now 50-year-old male.

As a result, the patient was taking high doses of oral and skin patch opioids as an outpatient, without pain relief. He was ultimately admitted to the hospital for high dose intravenous opioids which relieved his pain at the expense of putting him into a near-comatose state. Each time the hospital doctors tried to reduce the doses of intravenous opioids, the patient become more alert, but the pain returned with a vengeance.

Everyone was stuck – the patient, his family, and the doctors trying to take care of him.

Ultimately, the oncologist called Nura and we intervened as follows:

1. The patient was transferred from hospital discharge directly to our pain clinic.
2. On arrival at Nura, the patient received an epidural catheter dosed with a mixture of local anesthetic and opioid. The pain was relieved within minutes (think of a labor epidural – if an epidural can eliminate labor pain, it can control just about any type of pain).
3. Since epidural injection of local anesthetic/opioid wears off within two to three hours, we taught the patient to self-inject the epidural catheter at home overnight and, as a temporary measure, provided him with syringes pre-filled with local anesthetic to do this.
4. Our cancer pain team (physician, APP, implant RN, implant coordinator, medical device company rep) educated the patient on pain pump technology and we scheduled surgery to implant a pain pump the next day.
5. After the pump implant, the patient was able to return home with a continuous infusion plus boluses from the pain pump. Our cancer pain team is continuing to support him as an outpatient.

The patient's pain level has now been significantly reduced and he can self-administer pump doses with a hand-held remote-control device programmed to deliver pre-set doses of medication as needed. He continues to undergo chemotherapy directed by his oncologist.

If you have a patient struggling with chronic pain and you would like to discuss the case, please call our Provider Hotline at 763-537-1000.

Evaluation

Online:
nuraclinics.com/eval
Fax: 763.537.6666
Email:
referral@nuraclinics.com
Phone: 763-537-6000

Procedure Only

Online:
nuraclinics.com/procedure
Fax: 763.767.7193
Email:
dlpriorauth@nuraclinics.com
Phone: 763-537-6000

763-537-6000
nuraclinics.com

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