

Clinical Use of Opioid Analgesics in China: An Adequacy of Consumption Measure

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Abstract : Background: To understand the consumption trend of opioid analgesics and the consumption adequacy of opioid analgesic treatment for moderate to severe pain in China, as well as the pain control level of China with international perspective. Importance: To author's best knowledge, this is the first study in China to measure the adequacy of opioid analgesic treatment for moderate to severe pain considering disease pattern and with the standardized pain treatment guideline. Methods: A retrospective analysis was carried out to show the consumption frequency (daily defined doses, DDDs) of opioid analgesics and its trend in China from 2006 to 2016. Adequacy of consumption measure (ACM) was used to measure the number of needed morphine equivalents and the overall adequacy of opioid analgesic treatment of moderate to severe pain in China, and compared with international data. Results: The consumption frequency of opioid analgesics (DDDs) in China increased from 13,200,000 DDDs in 2006 to 44,200,000 DDDs in 2016, and showed an increasing trend. The growth rate was faster at first, especially in 2013, then slowed down, decreased slightly in 2015. The ACM of China increased from 0.0032 in 2006 to 0.0074 in 2016, with an overall trend of growth. The ACM level of China has been always a very poor level during 2006-2016. Conclusion: The consumption of opioid analgesics for the treatment of moderate to severe pain in China has always been inadequate. There is a huge gap between China and the international level. There are many reasons behind this problem, which lie in different aspects, including medical staff, patients and the public, health systems and social & cultural aspects. It is necessary to strengthen the training and education of medical staff and the patients, to use mass media to disseminate scientific knowledge of pain management, to encourage communications between doctors and patients, to improve regulatory system for the controlled medicines and the overall health systems, and to balance the regulatory goal for avoidance of abuse, and the social goal of meeting the increasing needs of the people for better life.

Keywords : opioid analgesics, adequate consumption measure, pain control, China

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