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Administration of Analgesic Doses of Anesthetic Agents: Repeated requests have been received for opinions of the Board of Nursing relative to registered nurses who are not CRNAs administering drugs which are officially classified as anesthetic agents but are ordered in dosages which are intended for analgesic effect and not for anesthesia. The Nursing Practice Committee studied the issue and made recommendations to the Board at the May 25, 1990 meeting of the Board. The Board then redefined its previous position regarding this matter, with the intent to maximize the outcomes of pain management regimes while safeguarding the life and health of the patient, in accord with the Board's statutory mandate.

In reference to agenda item #10 on May 25, 1990, the Board adopted the following statement:

The epidural administration of analgesic doses of anesthetic agents is within the realm of practice of the registered nurse who is not a CRNA provided the agency adheres to duly established guidelines/policies which meet the following criteria:

1. The purpose and goal of the treatment are clearly stated.
2. There are written protocols, with documentation of acceptance of the protocols by the medical staff of the agency.
3. The maximum dose per hour of an anesthetic agent which can be administered by a registered nurse who is not a CRNA is approved by the medical staff.
4. There is a specific written medical order, signed by a physician, for each patient receiving the treatment.
5. Orders to change the rate of infusion are written each time the rate is changed. In an emergency situation, the registered nurse may decrease the rate of infusion before calling the physician.

OR

There are clearly stated criteria, signed by the physician, for adjusting the rate of infusion.

6. There is documentation that the registered nurse has successfully completed a course of instruction which includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Didactic instruction and supervised clinical practice.
 - b. Content of course:
 - (1) Anatomy and physiology of the spinal cord and column.
 - (2) Purpose of the epidural catheter for pain management.
 - (3) Catheter placement and signs and symptoms of misplacement.

- (4) Effects of medication administered epidurally.
- (5) Untoward reaction to medication and management.
- (6) Complications.
- (7) Nursing care responsibilities:
 - (a) Observation
 - (b) Procedures
 - (c) Catheter maintenance
 - (d) Removal of catheter
- 7. There are clearly stated prerequisite conditions for:
 - a. Preparation of solution
 - b. Initiation of infusion
 - c. Emergency conditions
- 8. There are criteria for documentation of the procedure.

Prior to implementation of the program, a registered nurse representative of the agency shall submit the agency's guidelines/policies for review by the Board of Nursing.

Adopted May 25, 1990