

## **Anticipatory Medication in Home Palliative Care: A Systematic Review of Existing Practices, Challenges and Safeguards**

Hernández-Marrero P.<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Martins Pereira S.<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Project EnSupCare: Ensuring Home-Based Palliative Care at the End-of-Life: Supporting Family Carers to Manage Pain Medication

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**Background:** Family carers provide much of the essential care that enables patients to stay and die at home. Anticipatory prescribing is designed to ensure that there is a supply of medication and apparatus needed for family carers to administer them in the patient's home. Little is known about simultaneously promoting effective methods for ensuring the optimal management of anticipatory medications (AM) and supporting family carers when caring for their loved ones at the end of life at home.

**Aims:** To systematically review the existing literature on AM in home palliative care (HPC) with respect to its clinical, organizational, ethical and legal frameworks, main challenges and safeguards.

**Methods:** Systematic Review following PRISMA 2009. Databases: PubMed, Web of Science, Scopus, ProQuest, CINAHL Complete, MEDLINE Complete, Nursing & Allied Health Collection: Comprehensive, Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Cochrane Methodology Register, MedicLatina, Health Technology Assessments, NHS Economic Evaluation Database and EBSCO databases. Search terms: "anticipatory medication" and "palliative care". Inclusion criteria: studies reporting the use of AM in HPC, in English, German, Spanish and Portuguese, full text, references available. Selected articles were independently reviewed by two researchers. The Hawker et al tool was used for quality assessment.

**Results:** Of the 180 articles retrieved in our searches, 7 were included for analysis. Findings show that nurses have an active role in the prescription and training of family carers in the management of AM in HPC. Some conditions are taken into account for a safe practice of AM. Resourcing concerns, professional expertise and articulation among professionals are perceived as challenges.

**Conclusions:** Anticipatory medication is a major need and has ethical challenges in symptom control at the end of life at home. Research is needed to ensure optimal management of AM in HPC.

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