

## Refractory Cancer Pain

Pain Management Units, palliative care services and primary care providers work collaboratively in supporting the management of complex pain in cancer patients who may benefit from referral to a Pain Unit if-

- the pain is not adequately managed by appropriate oral and/or parenteral analgesics
- they are having unacceptable side-effects from the medication
- they have movement-related pain that is difficult to control
- they have specific conditions which may benefit from neurolytic blockade (pancreatic cancer), or neuropathic pain involving major neural plexus or peripheral nerve infiltration requiring intrathecal infusion therapy.

### Information Required

- Type of cancer, progression and prognosis
- Description of the pain, its site and radiation
- Current treatments and outcomes of previous trials of therapy
- Patient's expressed wishes with regard to treatment and NFR status
- A plan for care after discharge if the patient is from a rural community or a residential care facility.

### Investigations Required

- If procedure or implanted catheter may be indicated, CBE, U&E's, CRP and infective screen including MSSU.
- The results of any recent spinal scans
- CT or sagittal MRI views should also be available.

### Fax Referrals to

- Repatriation General Hospital Outpatient Clinic Fax: 8277 9476

## Red Flags

Red flags should prompt immediate GP referral to **Emergency Department**

- 🚩 Recent and unanticipated onset of new pain, numbness or weakness in the arms or legs
- 🚩 The onset of new difficulty with bladder or bowel control

### Suggested GP Management

- If the patient does not have regular contact with a palliative care consultant and the care is being managed by a general practitioner or specialist palliative care nurse, the treating professional is encouraged to seek advice from a palliative care consultant or a member of the Pain Management Unit Team to facilitate an early review as patients with refractory cancer pain will get priority access

### Clinical Resources

- Arcidiacono PG et al. Celiac plexus block for pancreatic cancer pain in adults (Review). The Cochrane Library 2013, Issue 8.
- Wong GY et al. Effect of Neurolytic Celiac Plexus Block on Pain Relief, Quality of Life and Survival in Patients With Unresectable Pancreatic Cancer, A Randomized Controlled Trial. JAMA. 2004; 291:1092-1099.
- Mercadante S. Problems of long-term spinal opioid treatment in advanced cancer patients. Pain 79. (1999) 1-13.

General Information to assist with referrals and the and Referral templates for FMC and RGH are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNOutpatients](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNOutpatients)

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1.0	November 2014	November 2016	Original