



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Clinical Practice: Frequently Asked Question

Q: Does ASPAN have a position on dose ranging of medications? If so, what is it?

A: The ASPAN Standards do not specifically address this issue. Dose ranging is a topic of review with regulatory agencies, and the reader is directed to regulatory resources and their facility risk management experts for direction on dose ranging. Pasero and McCaffery discuss multimodal pain management as an effective means for treating postoperative pain.¹

Dose ranging is a challenge in many facilities, and consequently, regulatory agencies, boards of nursing, and hospital policies are addressing this issue. Because of the regulatory requirements and changes, ASPAN has several broad statements in "A Position Statement on Safe Medication Administration" stressing the importance of assessment, intervention with multimodal therapy, reassessment, and adherence to regulatory and facility standards and policies.²

The ASPAN Standards also do not describe specific interventions, such as correlating medication doses to pain scales. ASPAN's pain guidelines basically follow the World Health Organization (WHO) pyramid of mild to moderate and moderate to severe, and stress the importance of a multimodal approach. In an article by Manworren, a discussion concerning data reporting between 1995 and 2003 indicated that 276 sentinel events involved a 21% medication error rate related to opioids administration, and the overwhelming majority of these opioid errors resulted in death. However, it could not be determined whether range orders contributed to the events, or in what environment of care the errors occurred.³

Manworren also cites a consensus paper published by the American Society for Pain Management Nursing and the American Pain Society. This document stresses the importance of the critical judgment and empirical knowledge of a nurse in determining the right dose of the right drug to relieve the patient's pain.³

References:

1. Pasero C, McCaffery M. Pain Assessment and Pharmacologic Management. St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier; 2011.
2. American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses. *2019-2020 Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements*. Cherry Hill, NJ: ASPAN; 2018.
3. Manworren R. A call to action to protect range orders: A consensus statement supports this important nursing responsibility, *AJN* 2006;106(7): 65.

This FAQ has been reviewed and updated July 2019