

Parasite May Be the Cause of New-Onset Seizures

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MIAMI BEACH — Public health officials are stepping up efforts to combat cysticercosis, a parasitic infection with dire neurologic consequences that is on the rise in the United States, according to James H. Maguire, M.D., chief of the parasitic diseases branch of the National Center for Infectious Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta.

Each year in the United States, there are an estimated 1,000 new cases of cysticercosis, a leading cause of adult-onset epilepsy in endemic areas such as Central America and Africa, Dr. Maguire said at the annual meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

Cysticercosis is acquired after accidental ingestion of the eggs of the pork tapeworm *Taenia solium*.

Infected people shed the eggs in their feces and infection can spread through

contaminated food, water, or surfaces.

Once the eggs hatch in the stomach, they penetrate the intestine and travel through the bloodstream. The eggs produce characteristic cysts anywhere in the body; cysts in the brain cause neurocysticercosis and produce seizures and other neurologic sequelae, according to Dr. Maguire.

“It’s a nasty infection,” Dr. Maguire told FAMILY PRACTICE NEWS. “The real message is if someone comes in with seizures and

they have a single lesion on CT or MRI, it could be cysticercosis.”

Physicians need a high index of suspicion; an accurate diagnosis could spare a patient neurosurgery, he added.

If a central nervous system cyst blocks the flow of cerebrospinal fluid, hydrocephalus can ensue. Surgery or shunt placement is indicated in some of these patients, but in most cases the cysts resolve on their own.

Other neurologic sequelae include a permanent, stroke-like syndrome. Even the scar left behind by a former cyst can become the focus for future seizures, Dr. Maguire warned.

Patients are generally treated with antiparasitic drugs in combination with anti-inflammatory agents.

Infection typically comes from eating contaminated pork, fruits, and vegetables, but *T. solium* is also spread through contact with infected people or fecal matter.

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Federal standards for the U.S. pork industry protect most people in this country, Dr. Maguire said.

Larval stage infection with *T. solium* leads to symptomatic cysticercosis, but people with an adult tapeworm can be unknowing sources of infection. Four cases of neurocysticercosis in New York City among Orthodox Jews—who do not eat pork—were initially puzzling to investigators (N. Engl. J. Med. 1992;327:692-5).

Only one had traveled to an endemic area. However, six domestic employees were tested; one was found to have had an active infection with taenia species and another had a positive serologic test.

“If a person is infected by someone with an adult tapeworm, contact tracing becomes very important,” Dr. Maguire said.

A strategy for preventing the infection is to “go after the disease at its source” in endemic areas and improve immigrant health, Dr. Maguire said.

The World Health Organization and other agencies have an active cysticercosis eradication program.

As part of a strategy to eradicate the infection at its source, pigs are being vaccinated against the parasite, but adoption is not yet widespread.

Cysticercosis is becoming increasingly recognized in U.S.-born residents, although it is still primarily a disease of immigrants from countries such as Mexico, Central America, sub-Saharan Africa, India, and East Asia, Dr. Maguire said.

Increasingly, prevalence of cysticercosis is reported in New Mexico, New York, and especially California, states with a large number of immigrants. However, “We saw 6-12 cases per year in Boston when I worked there—not a hotbed of immigration,” he added.



BRIEF SUMMARY OF PRESCRIBING INFORMATION (For complete prescribing information please see package insert.)

WARNING:
OxyContin is an opioid agonist and a Schedule II controlled substance with an abuse liability similar to morphine.
OxyContin can be abused in a manner similar to other opioid agonists, legal or illicit. This should be considered when prescribing or dispensing OxyContin in situations where the physician or pharmacist is concerned about an increased risk of misuse, abuse, or diversion.
OxyContin Tablets are a controlled-release oral formulation of oxycodone hydrochloride indicated for the management of moderate to severe pain when a continuous, around-the-clock analgesic is needed for an extended period of time.
OxyContin Tablets are NOT intended for use as a prn analgesic.
OxyContin 80 mg and 160 mg Tablets ARE FOR USE IN OPIOID-TOLERANT PATIENTS ONLY. These tablet strengths may cause fatal respiratory depression when administered to patients not previously exposed to opioids.
OxyContin TABLETS ARE TO BE SWALLOWED WHOLE AND ARE NOT TO BE BROKEN, CHEWED, OR CRUSHED. TAKING BROKEN, CHEWED, OR CRUSHED OxyContin TABLETS LEADS TO RAPID RELEASE AND ABSORPTION OF A POTENTIALLY FATAL DOSE OF OXYCODONE.

INDICATIONS AND USAGE
OxyContin® Tablets are a controlled-release oral formulation of oxycodone hydrochloride indicated for the management of moderate to severe pain when a continuous, around-the-clock analgesic is needed for an extended period of time.
OxyContin is NOT intended for use as a prn analgesic.

Physicians should individualize treatment in every case, initiating therapy at the appropriate point along a progression from non-opioid analgesics, such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and acetaminophen to opioids in a plan of pain management such as outlined by the World Health Organization, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (formerly known as the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research), the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), or the American Pain Society.
OxyContin is not indicated for pain in the immediate postoperative period (the first 12-24 hours following surgery), or if the pain is mild, or not expected to persist for an extended period of time. OxyContin is only indicated for postoperative use if the patient is already receiving the drug prior to surgery or if the post-operative pain is expected to be moderate to severe and persist for an extended period of time. Physicians should individualize treatment, moving from parenteral to oral analgesics as appropriate. (See American Pain Society guidelines.)

CONTRAINDICATIONS
OxyContin® is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to oxycodone, or in any situation where opioids are contraindicated. This includes patients with significant respiratory depression (in unmonitored settings or the absence of resuscitative equipment), and patients with acute asthma or hypercarbia.
OxyContin is contraindicated in any patient who has or is suspected of having paralytic ileus.
WARNINGS
OXYCONTIN TABLETS ARE TO BE SWALLOWED WHOLE AND ARE NOT TO BE BROKEN, CHEWED, OR CRUSHED. TAKING BROKEN, CHEWED, OR CRUSHED OXYCONTIN TABLETS LEADS TO RAPID RELEASE AND ABSORPTION OF A POTENTIALLY FATAL DOSE OF OXYCODONE.
OxyContin 80 mg and 160 mg Tablets ARE FOR USE IN OPIOID-TOLERANT PATIENTS ONLY. These tablet strengths may cause fatal respiratory depression when administered to patients not previously exposed to opioids.
OxyContin 80 mg and 160 mg Tablets are for use only in opioid-tolerant patients requiring daily oxycodone equivalent dosages of 160 mg or more for the 80 mg tablet and 320 mg or more for the 160 mg tablet. Care should be taken in the prescribing of these tablet strengths. Patients should be instructed against use by individuals other than the patient for whom it was prescribed, as such inappropriate use may have severe medical consequences, including death.

Misuse, Abuse and Diversion of Opioids
Oxycodone is an opioid agonist of the morphine-type. Such drugs are sought by drug abusers and people with addiction disorders and are subject to criminal diversion.
Oxycodone can be abused in a manner similar to other opioid agonists, legal or illicit. This should be considered when prescribing or dispensing OxyContin in situations where the physician or pharmacist is concerned about an increased risk of misuse, abuse, or diversion.
OxyContin has been reported as being abused by crushing, chewing, snorting, or injecting the dissolved product. These practices will result in the uncontrolled delivery of the opioid and pose a significant risk to the abuser that could result in overdose and death (see WARNINGS AND DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION).
Concerns about abuse, addiction, and diversion should not prevent the proper management of pain. The development of addiction to opioid analgesics in properly managed patients with pain has been reported to be rare. However, data are not available to establish the true incidence of addiction in chronic pain patients.
Healthcare professionals should contact their State Professional Licensing Board, or State Controlled Substances Authority for information on how to prevent and detect abuse or diversion of this product.
Interactions with Alcohol and Drugs of Abuse
Oxycodone may be expected to have additive effects when used in conjunction with alcohol, other opioids, or illicit drugs that cause central nervous system depression.

DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION
OxyContin® is a mu-agonist opioid with an abuse liability similar to morphine and is a Schedule II controlled substance. Oxycodone, like morphine and other opioids used in analgesia, can be abused and is subject to criminal diversion.
Drug addiction is characterized by compulsive use, use for non-medical purposes, and continued use despite harm or risk of harm. Drug addiction is a treatable disease, utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach, but relapse is common.

“Drug-seeking” behavior is very common in addicts and drug abusers. Drug-seeking tactics include emergency calls or visits near the end of office hours, refusal to undergo appropriate examination, testing or referral, repeated “loss” of prescriptions, tampering with prescriptions and reluctance to provide prior medical records or contact information for other treating physicians). “Doctor shopping” to obtain additional prescriptions is common among drug abusers and people suffering from untreated addiction.
Abuse and addiction are separate and distinct from physical dependence and tolerance. Physicians should be aware that addiction may not be accompanied by concurrent tolerance and symptoms of physical dependence in all addicts. In addition, abuse of opioids can occur in the absence of true addiction and is characterized by misuse for non-medical purposes, often in combination with other psychoactive substances.
OxyContin, like other opioids, has been reported to increase intracranial pressure. Oxycodone produces effects on pupillary response and consciousness which may obscure neurologic signs of further increases in intracranial pressure in patients with head injuries.

Head Injury
The respiratory depressant effects of opioids include carbon dioxide retention and secondary elevation of cerebrospinal fluid pressure, and may be markedly exaggerated in the presence of head injury, intracranial lesions, or other causes of pre-existing increased intracranial pressure. Oxycodone produces effects on pupillary response and consciousness which may obscure neurologic signs of further increases in intracranial pressure in patients with head injuries.

Hypotensive Effect
OxyContin may cause severe hypotension. There is an added risk to individuals whose ability to maintain blood pressure has been compromised by a depleted blood volume, or after concurrent use with drugs such as phenothiazines or other agents which compromise vasomotor tone. Oxycodone may produce orthostatic hypotension in ambulatory patients. Oxycodone, like all opioid analgesics of the morphine-type, should be administered with caution to patients in circulatory shock, since vasodilation produced by the drug may further reduce cardiac output and blood pressure.

PRECAUTIONS
General
Opioid analgesics have a narrow therapeutic index in certain patient populations, especially when combined with CNS depressant drugs, and should be reserved for cases where the benefits of opioid analgesia outweigh the known risks of respiratory depression, altered mental state, and postural hypotension.
Use of OxyContin® is associated with increased potential risks and should be used only with caution in the following conditions: acute alcoholism; adrenocortical insufficiency (e.g., Addison's disease); CNS depression or coma; delirium tremens; debilitated patients; hypohydrated patients; hypotension associated with respiratory depression; myxedema or hypothyroidism; prostatic hypertrophy or urethral stricture; severe impairment of hepatic, pulmonary or renal function; and toxic psychosis.

The administration of oxycodone may obscure the diagnosis or clinical course in patients with acute abdominal conditions. Oxycodone may aggravate convulsions in patients with convulsive disorders, and all opioids may induce or aggravate seizures in some clinical settings.

Interactions with other CNS Depressants
OxyContin should be used with caution and started in a reduced dosage (1/3 to 1/2 of the usual dosage) in patients who are concurrently receiving other central nervous system depressants including sedatives or hypnotics, general anesthetics, phenothiazines, other tranquilizers, and alcohol. Interactive effects resulting in respiratory depression, hypotension, profound sedation, or coma may result if these drugs are taken in combination with the usual doses of OxyContin.

Interactions with Mixed Agonist/Antagonist Opioid Analgesics
Agonist/antagonist analgesics (e.g., pentazocine, nalbuphine, and butorphanol) should be administered with caution to a patient who has received or is receiving a course of therapy with a pure opioid agonist analgesic such as oxycodone. In this situation, mixed agonist/antagonist analgesics may reduce the analgesic effect of oxycodone and/or may precipitate withdrawal symptoms in these patients.

Ambulatory Surgery and Postoperative Use
OxyContin is not indicated for pre-operative analgesia (administration pre-operatively for the management of postoperative pain).
OxyContin is not indicated for pain in the immediate postoperative period (the first 12 to 24 hours following surgery) for patients not previously taking the drug, because its safety in this setting has not been established.
OxyContin is not indicated for pain in the postoperative period if the pain is mild or not expected to persist for an extended period of time.

OxyContin® is only indicated for postoperative use if the patient is already receiving the drug prior to surgery or if the postoperative pain is expected to be moderate to severe and persist for an extended period of time. Physicians should individualize treatment, moving from parenteral to oral analgesics as appropriate (See American Pain Society guidelines).
Patients who are already receiving OxyContin® Tablets as part of ongoing analgesic therapy may be safely continued on the drug if appropriate dosage adjustments are made considering the procedure, other drugs given, and the temporary changes in physiology caused by the surgical intervention (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION).

OxyContin and other morphine-like opioids have been shown to decrease bowel motility. Ileus is a common postoperative complication, especially after intra-abdominal surgery with opioid analgesia. Caution should be taken to monitor for decreased bowel motility in postoperative patients receiving opioids. Standard supportive therapy should be implemented.

Use in Pancreatic/Biliary Tract Disease
Oxycodone may cause spasm of the sphincter of Oddi and should be used with caution in patients with biliary tract disease, including acute pancreatitis. Opioids like oxycodone may cause increases in the serum amylase level.

Tolerance and Physical Dependence
Tolerance is the need for increasing doses of opioids to maintain a defined effect such as analgesia (in the absence of disease progression or other external factors). Physical dependence is manifested by withdrawal symptoms after abrupt discontinuation of a drug or upon administration of an antagonist. Physical dependence and tolerance are not unusual during chronic opioid therapy.

The opioid abstinence or withdrawal syndrome is characterized by some or all of the following: restlessness, lacrimation, rhinorrhea, yawning, perspiration, chills, myalgia, and mydriasis. Other symptoms also may develop, including: irritability, anxiety, backache, joint pain, weakness, abdominal cramps, insomnia, nausea, anorexia, vomiting, diarrhea, or increased blood pressure, respiratory rate, or heart rate. In general, opioids should not be abruptly discontinued.

Information for Patients/Caregivers
If clinically advisable, patients receiving OxyContin Tablets or their caregivers should be given the following information by the physician, nurse, pharmacist, or caregiver:
1. Patients should be aware that OxyContin Tablets contain oxycodone, which is a morphine-like substance.
2. Patients should be advised that they may pass empty matrix “ghosts” (tablets) via colostomy or in the stool, and that this is of no concern since the active medication has already been absorbed.
3. Patients should be advised to report episodes of breakthrough pain and adverse experiences occurring during therapy. Individualization of dosage is essential to make optimal use of this medication.
4. Patients should be advised not to adjust the dose of OxyContin® without consulting the prescribing professional.
5. Patients should be advised that OxyContin may impair mental and/or physical ability required for the performance of potentially hazardous tasks (e.g., driving, operating heavy machinery).
6. Patients should not combine OxyContin with alcohol or other central nervous system depressants (sleep aids, tranquilizers) except by the orders of the prescribing physician, because dangerous additive effects may occur, resulting in serious injury or death.
7. Women of childbearing potential who become, or are planning to become, pregnant should be advised to consult their physician regarding the effects of analgesics and other drug use during pregnancy on themselves and their unborn child.
8. Patients should be advised that OxyContin is a potential drug of abuse. They should protect it from theft, and it should never be given to anyone other than the individual for whom it was prescribed.
9. Patients should be advised that they may pass empty matrix “ghosts” (tablets) via colostomy or in the stool, and that this is of no concern since the active medication has already been absorbed.
10. Patients should be advised that if they have been receiving treatment with OxyContin for more than a few weeks and cessation of therapy is indicated, it may be appropriate to taper the OxyContin dose, rather than abruptly discontinuing it, due to the risk of precipitating withdrawal symptoms. Their physician can provide a dose schedule to accomplish a gradual discontinuation of the medication.
11. Patients should be instructed to keep OxyContin in a secure place out of the reach of children. When OxyContin is no longer needed, the unused tablets should be destroyed by flushing down the toilet.

Use in Drug and Alcohol Addiction
OxyContin is an opioid with no approved use in the management of addictive disorders. Its proper usage in individuals with drug or alcohol dependence, either active or in remission, is for the management of pain requiring opioid analgesia.

Drug-Drug Interactions
Opioid analgesics, including OxyContin®, may enhance the neuromuscular blocking action of skeletal muscle relaxants and produce an increased degree of respiratory depression.
Oxycodone is metabolized in part to oxymorphone via cytochrome P450 2D6. While this pathway may be blocked by a variety of drugs (e.g., certain cardiovascular drugs including amiodarone and quinidine as well as polycyclic antidepressants), such blockade has not yet been shown to be of clinical significance with this agent. Clinicians should be aware of this possible interaction, however.

Use with CNS Depressants
OxyContin®, like all opioid analgesics, should be started at 1/3 to 1/2 of the usual dosage in patients who are concurrently receiving other central nervous system depressants including sedatives or hypnotics, general anesthetics, phenothiazines, centrally acting anti-emetics, tranquilizers, and alcohol because respiratory depression, hypotension, and profound sedation or coma may result. No specific interaction between oxycodone and monoamine oxidase inhibitors has been observed, but caution in the use of any opioid in patients taking this class of drugs is appropriate.

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility
Studies of oxycodone to evaluate its carcinogenic potential have not been conducted.
Oxycodone was not mutagenic in the following assays: Ames Salmonella test and C. coli test with and without metabolic activation; a clastogenicity assay in human lymphocytes; and a human lymphocyte chromosomal assay in the presence of metabolic activation in the human chromosomal aberration test (at greater than or equal to 1250 µg/mL) at 24 but not 48 hours of exposure and in the mouse lymphoma assay at doses of 50 µg/mL or greater with metabolic activation and at 400 µg/mL or greater without metabolic activation.

Pregnancy
Teratogenic Effects—Category C: Reproduction studies have been performed in rats and rabbits by oral administration at doses up to 8 mg/kg and 125 mg/kg, respectively. These doses are 3 and 46 times a human dose of 160 mg/day, based on mg/kg basis. The results did not reveal evidence of harm to the fetus due to oxycodone. There are, however, no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Because animal reproduction studies are not always predictive of human response, this drug should be used during pregnancy only if clearly needed.

Labor and Delivery
OxyContin® is not recommended for use in women during and immediately prior to labor and delivery because oral opioids may cause respiratory depression in the newborn. Neonates whose mothers have been taking opioids chronically may exhibit respiratory depression and/or withdrawal symptoms, either at birth and/or in the nursery.

Nursing Mothers
Low concentrations of oxycodone have been detected in breast milk. Withdrawal symptoms can occur in breast-feeding infants when maternal administration of an opioid analgesic is stopped. Ordinarily, nursing should not be undertaken while a patient is receiving OxyContin because of the possibility of sedation and/or respiratory depression in the infant.

Pediatric Use
Safety and effectiveness of OxyContin have not been established in pediatric patients below the age of 18. It must be remembered that OxyContin Tablets cannot be crushed or divided for administration.

Geriatric Use
In controlled pharmacokinetic studies in elderly subjects (greater than 65 years) the clearance of oxycodone appeared to be slightly reduced. Compared to young adults, the plasma concentrations of oxycodone were increased approximately 15%. Of the total number of subjects (445) in clinical studies of OxyContin, 148 (33.3%) were age 65 and older (including those age 75 and older) while 40 (9.0%) were age 75 and older in clinical trials with appropriate titration of therapy and dose titration, no untoward or unexpected side effects were seen in the elderly patients who received OxyContin. Thus, the usual doses and dosing intervals are appropriate for these patients. As with all opioids, the starting dose should be reduced to 1/3 to 1/2 of the usual dosage in debilitated, non-tolerant patients. Respiratory depression is the chief hazard in elderly or debilitated patients, usually following large initial doses in non-tolerant patients, or when opioids are given in conjunction with other agents that depress respiration.

Laboratory Monitoring
Due to the broad range of plasma concentrations seen in clinical populations, the varying degrees of pain, and the development of tolerance, plasma oxycodone measurements are usually not helpful in clinical management. Plasma concentrations of the active drug substance may be of value in selected, unusual or complex cases.

Hepatic Impairment
A study of OxyContin in patients with hepatic impairment indicates greater plasma concentrations than those with normal function. The initiation of therapy at 1/3 to 1/2 the usual doses and careful dose titration is warranted.

Renal Impairment
Serious adverse reactions which may be associated with OxyContin Tablet therapy in clinical use are those observed with other opioid analgesics, including respiratory depression, apnea, respiratory arrest, and (to an even lesser degree) circulatory depression, hypotension, or shock (see OVERDOSAGE).

Gender Differences
In pharmacokinetic studies, opioid-naïve females demonstrate up to 25% higher average plasma concentrations and greater frequency of typical opioid adverse events than males, even after adjustment for body weight. The clinical relevance of a difference of this magnitude is low for a drug intended for chronic use at individualized dosages, and there was no male/female difference detected for efficacy or adverse events in clinical trials.

ADVERSE REACTIONS
The safety of OxyContin® was evaluated in double-blind clinical trials involving 713 patients with moderate to severe pain of various etiologies. In open-label studies of cancer pain, 187 patients received OxyContin in total daily doses ranging from 20 mg to 640 mg per day. The average total daily dose was approximately 165 mg per day.

In many cases the frequency of these events during initiation of therapy may be minimized by careful individualization of starting dosage, slow titration, and the avoidance of large swings in the plasma concentrations of the opioid. Many of these adverse events will cease or decrease in intensity as OxyContin therapy is continued and some degree of tolerance is developed.

Clinical trials comparing OxyContin with immediate-release oxycodone and placebo revealed a similar adverse event profile between OxyContin and immediate-release oxycodone. The most common adverse events (>5% reported by patients at least once during therapy were:

	OxyContin (n=227)	Immediate-Release (n=225)	Placebo (n=45)
Constipation	(2%)	(2%)	(%)
Nausea	(23)	(27)	(11)
Somnolence	(23)	(24)	(4)
Dizziness	(13)	(16)	(9)
Pruritus	(13)	(12)	(2)
Vomiting	(12)	(14)	(7)
Headache	(7)	(8)	(7)
Dry Mouth	(6)	(7)	(2)
Asthenia	(6)	(7)	—
Swelling	(5)	(6)	(2)

The following adverse experiences were reported in OxyContin®-treated patients with an incidence between 1% and 5%. In descending order of frequency they were: anorexia, nervousness, insomnia, fever, confusion, diarrhea, abdominal pain, dyspepsia, rash, anxiety, euphoria, dyspnea, postural hypotension, chills, twitching, gastritis, abnormal dreams, thought abnormalities, and hiccups.

The following adverse reactions occurred in less than 1% of patients involved in clinical trials or were reported in postmarketing experience.
General: accidental injury, chest pain, facial edema, malaise, neck pain, pain, and symptoms associated with either an anaphylactic or anaphylactoid reaction.
Cardiovascular: migraine, syncope, vasodilation, ST depression

Digestive: dysphagia, eructation, flatulence, gastrointestinal disorder, increased appetite, nausea and vomiting, stomatitis, ileus
Hemic and Lymphatic: lymphadenopathy
Metabolic and Nutritional: dehydration, edema, hyponatremia, peripheral edema, syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone secretion, thirst

Nervous: abnormal gait, agitation, amnesia, depersonalization, depression, emotional lability, hallucination, hyperkinesia, hypotonia, malaise, paresthesia, seizures, speech disorder, stupor, tinnitus, tremor, vertigo, withdrawal syndrome with or without seizures
Respiratory: cough increased, pharyngitis, voice alteration
Skin: dry skin, exfoliative dermatitis, urticaria
Special Senses: abnormal vision, taste perversion

Urogenital: amenorrhea, decreased libido, dysuria, hematuria, impotence, polyuria, urinary retention, urination impaired
OVERDOSAGE
Acute overdose with oxycodone can be manifested by respiratory depression, somnolence progressing to stupor or coma, skeletal muscle flaccidity, cold and clammy skin, constricted pupils, bradycardia, hypotension, and death.

Deaths due to overdose have been reported with abuse and misuse of OxyContin® by ingesting, inhaling, or injecting the crushed tablets. Review of case reports has indicated that the risk of fatal overdose is further increased when OxyContin is abused concurrently with alcohol or other CNS depressants, including other opioids.

In the treatment of oxycodone overdose, primary attention should be given to the re-establishment of a patent airway and institution of assisted or controlled ventilation. Supportive measures (including oxygen and vasopressors) should be employed in the management of circulatory shock and pulmonary edema accompanying overdose as indicated. Cardiac arrest or arrhythmias may require cardiac massage or defibrillation.

The pure opioid antagonists such as naloxone or nalmefene are specific antidotes against respiratory depression from opioid overdose. Opioid antagonists should not be administered in the absence of clinically significant respiratory or circulatory depression secondary to oxycodone overdose. In patients who are physically dependent on any opioid agonist including OxyContin, an abrupt or complete reversal of opioid effects may precipitate an acute abstinence syndrome. The severity of the withdrawal syndrome produced will depend on the degree of physical dependence and the dose of the antagonist administered. Please see the prescribing information for the specific opioid antagonist for details of their proper use.

Managing Expected Opioid Adverse Experiences
Most patients receiving opioids, especially those who are opioid-naïve, will experience side effects. Frequently the side effects from OxyContin are transient, but may require evaluation and management. Adverse events such as constipation should be anticipated and treated aggressively and prophylactically with a stimulant laxative and/or stool softener. Patients do not usually become tolerant to the constipating effects of opioids.

Other opioid-related side effects such as sedation and nausea are usually self-limited and often do not persist beyond the first few days. If nausea persists and is unacceptable to the patient, treatment with antiemetic or other modalities may relieve these symptoms and should be considered. Patients receiving OxyContin® may pass an intact matrix “ghost” in the stool or via colostomy. These ghosts contain little or no residual oxycodone and are of no clinical consequence.

SAFETY AND HANDLING
OxyContin Tablets are solid dosage forms that contain oxycodone which is a controlled substance. Like morphine, oxycodone is controlled under Schedule II of the Controlled Substances Act.
OxyContin has been targeted for theft and diversion by criminals. Healthcare professionals should contact their State Professional Licensing Board or State Controlled Substances Authority for information on how to prevent and detect abuse or diversion of this product.

Store at 25°C (77°F); excursions permitted between 15°-30°C (59°-86°F).
Healthcare professionals can telephone Purdue Pharma's Medical Services Department (1-888-726-7535) for information on this product.
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