

Attitudes to use of low-dose opioids for treatment of dyspnea in advanced Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD): A Study of Physicians in Nova Scotia

Preliminary interview guide

1. Could you tell me a bit about your area of practice and where you encounter patients with advanced COPD? Many patients?
2. Could you tell me about symptoms you find to be most prevalent in the patients you see with advancing COPD...how do you manage these symptoms...
3. Could you tell me about the disease trajectory of COPD (from your experience)? What is prognostication like? How do you personally define the terminal stages?
4. In your own words, what does palliative care mean to you...your role/comfort/experience with palliative care in general...
5. Do you refer to palliative medicine? Patients with advanced COPD?
6. Have you ever used opioids specifically to control dyspnea? In cancer – secondary diagnosis COPD? In COPD alone without malignancy? Comfort?
 - a. If yes, inquire about these experiences
 - i. what made you decide this person could be a candidate for opioid therapy
 - ii. setting (home of hosp)
 - iii. stage of disease
 - iv. Type of opioid? Dosing? Frequency (regular or prn)
 - b. If no, have you ever *considered* using opioid for treatment of dyspnea? Does the setting make a difference for you?
7. Concerns with opioids in COPD? Addiction? Respiratory suppression?
8. We spoke of terminal stages of COPD earlier, are you okay to use opioids for dyspnea in this context? What about longer term (not surprised if patient died in the next year but they may not)?
9. Type of dyspnea (exertional or persistently at rest)
10. What have patients or families said about opioids if you've suggested? Suggested and refused? By patient? Family?

Appendix 4

11. This is digging...have patients with COPD who use opioids for pain commented on whether it decreased their shortness of breath?

12. Would you consider using low dose opioids for patients with advanced COPD who are not in the terminal stage (as you have defined it)?

13. Any other comments about the use of low-dose opioids for the treatment of dyspnea in patients with advanced COPD?