



CASE RECOMMENDATION FORM

Presenter Credential: PMHNP, CARN-AP

After review of the case presentation and discussion of this patient's case among the ECHO Community of Practice, the following suggestions have been made:

Summary: 41-year-old male who is currently receiving treatment for suboxone. The patient was in rehab 2 years ago where he started suboxone and would like to go off the medication. The patient complains of pain as well. The patient would like to stop taking buprenorphine and is currently staying sober. He admits that if he were not on probation, he would be smoking marijuana every day.

Treatment Question: What are your thoughts on the treatment path taken and what experiences have you had with similar patients?

Recommendations:

- Your overall method for tapering off the Buprenorphine was accurate!
- Buprenorphine for Alcohol Use Disorder:
 - There is limited research supporting buprenorphine for reducing alcohol cravings, so while theoretically it makes sense, this is not the standard of care.
 - If the patient is experiencing pain, given his alcohol use disorder, buprenorphine is a safer alternative to full agonist opioids for chronic pain management. In this case, start with the lowest dose, preferably using a transdermal patch and titrate as needed.
- Tapering off Buprenorphine:
 - Gradually decrease doses; transitioning from the lowest dose to a patch can be effective. Reduce to half a tablet every other day as the final tapering step.
 - Consider using 2 mg films and have the patient cut them into quarters for finer dose adjustments.
 - Provide supportive care during a tapering period as patients are likely to experience withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal symptom medication may be appropriate for some patients, but counsel them to expect some discomfort for a week or two.
 - Consider using other low dose patches that can help in the tapering process. There may be restraints from an insurance/cost perspective.

Consider presenting follow-up for this patient case or any other patient cases at a future ECHO Clinic session.

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