

## CARING FOR THE INPATIENT REQUIRING ALCOHOL DETOXIFICATION

It is estimated that 24% of hospitalized patients are alcohol dependant and can go into withdrawal. Symptoms range from mild to life-threatening - 15% experiencing withdrawal seizures, and 5% developing delirium tremors. Delayed recognition and treatment can lead to a complicated and extended hospital course. Considering the significant morbidity and mortality associated with alcohol withdrawal, early detection and treatment are essential.

Located in the Meditech Magic Menu is the **MEDITECH LIBRARY.**

In the Library under Physician Orders are Protocols.

Located within Protocols are:

### Alcohol Withdrawal Protocol

- The Alcohol Withdrawal Information Sheet includes the following:

- Review of the four (4) Stages of Alcohol Withdrawal.
- Medical Management - Therapy for ethanol withdrawal should include supportive measures, including fluid & electrolyte management, and thiamine as well as supportive care based on the severity of symptoms.
- Drug Management based on the patient's CIWA - Ar Score
- The Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Alcohol (CIWA - Ar) Tool - The CIWA-Ar Scale is a reliable and validated 10-item scale that should be used to provide effective individualized therapy.

-The second alcohol related information included under protocols is *The Alcohol Withdrawal Assessment* that refers the reader back to the main Library Menu under *Mental Health Consults*.

Within this cabinet is the *ETOH Withdrawal Protocol* that discusses the following:

- *Guidelines for inpatient Alcohol Detoxification* - An educational tool to aid clinician decision making, not a standard of care. It is intended for use when clinical judgement indicates. For the patient whose history or presentation suggests significant risk of alcohol withdrawal, the guidelines need to be initiated as soon as possible to help with appropriate choice of benzodiazepine, dosing, and follow-up treatment alternatives. The purpose of this guideline also is to evaluate the patient using three things:
  - The patient's drinking history
  - The patient's general health management concerns
  - Suggested treatment protocols based on the CIWA - Ar Scale
- *Alcohol Withdrawal Treatment Suggestions* - This guideline suggests routine palliative medications as well as medications to be considered based on the CIWA-Ar severity score.

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