Pain Control Medication – Tramadol

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

In any medical practice pain is an important issue that physicians are faced with on a daily basis. Orthopaedic surgery presents a twofold problem which is –

- Patients coming to us with painful conditions that have arisen over time or conditions that have been caused by an injury.
- Patients who experience pain due to our surgical treatment.

A huge variable is that all patients do not experience pain in the same way. We see this all the time in elective surgeries that we perform routinely in the same way over and over.

One person may require Norco for days on end and another person takes 1 or 2 Ibuprofen 800mg tablets and that’s all. The “Ouchy Index” follows the so called bell shaped curve.

For patients with painful conditions the first choice should be a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) like Ibuprofen (or similar) or Tylenol.

Some people can’t take NSAIDs or Tylenol for certain reasons sometimes related to concern about the liver.

Enter Tramadol (Ultram)

What is it? Well it is not an NSAID. It is an opioid medication that is made synthetically which can be prescribed for pain from conditions as well as pain from injuries and surgery.

It is not as potent as Norco, Vicodin etc., but a lot of our patients don’t need medication that strong. I think we have been killing an ant with a hammer for too long.

Tramadol falls somewhere between NSAIDs and the potent Norco and Vicodin.

Perhaps patients have wanted and expected to be pain free instead of bearing some pain and taking Tramadol and Tylenol (they can be taken together) to ease their discomfort.

Physicians may have been over prescribing pain medication in the last 10 – 15 years because certain national organizations supervising hospitals and medical practice make it a priority that pain should be eliminated.

Meet In The Middle

The opioid crisis will be a lot less of a problem if physicians drastically decrease the potent prescriptions and patients stop insisting on them and be willing to endure some degree of pain. I know from personal experience what I am talking about.

Addiction

Any opioid medication including Tramadol can be addictive and be abused.

Side Effects

There are some, but the side effects are often milder.

- Drowsiness
• Nervousness
• Constipation, but less of a problem
• Don’t take with antidepressant drugs or if at risk for seizures

*My patients put their trust in me and what I do improves the quality of their lives.*

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Be well.

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