

Summary of “Continuous IV Ketamine Infusions for Intractable Acute Pain and Complex Regional Pain Syndrome” by Christine Rupprecht MSN, RN-BC.

Sorry if you missed this one! Despite traffic, we gathered and learned with Chris and Kit Ryan as they shared their experiences and findings in working with Ketamine over the years. There has been much discussion on the list serve about Ketamine and we are fortunate to have a leader share her knowledge with us.

Ketamine is a derivative of PCP and one of its side effects are hallucinations. These hallucinations are usually ‘not bad’ but rather pleasant with low dose Ketamine, so is there a need to interfere if there is also good pain relief? Just a thought ... At higher dose Ketamine, these hallucinations may become unpleasant.

The goals in the use of Ketamine are to “reset the pain pathways”, lower pain level by 50% and decrease opioid requirement by 50% as well.

It has proven itself to be very effective in treating Neuropathic Pain as it acts on the NMDA receptors. You may also see a mild increase in BP and HR as it acts on the sympathetic nervous system, which makes it ideal for shock patients as well.

Current trends in use are:

- 72hr continuous infusions of sub anesthetic, ultra Low Dose Ketamine for intractable, opioid resistant acute pain
- ≤96hr continuous infusions of High Dose Ketamine for severe chronic pain; ICU setting
- As an adjunct in Opioid Detox
- Combined with Regional Catheters for Neuropathic Sympathetically maintained pain such as CRPS

Special Properties of Ketamine

- Airway is remarkably preserved
- Few such agents exist for anxiety, analgesia and amnesia
- Analgesia provided by Ketamine is double that provided by Morphine
- Amnesia induced is similar to that induced by Midazolam or Versed
- Safest anesthetic for inexperienced anesthesia providers

Monitor your patient for:

- Unpleasant hallucinations, flashbacks, confusion
- Nystagmus
- Significant increases in HR &/or BP
- Nightmares
- Somnolence
- Nausea or vomiting may be seen with high dose