Introduction

The efficacy and benefits of opioid medication use in the treatment of both acute and chronic pain has been extensively proven in medical literature (1-2,3,4). However, this class of medication has recently come to the forefront of public and media attention because of the unfortunate abuse by the vast majority of patients. The word “opiates” often has a negative connotation in today’s society. This is unfortunate given the vast amount of pain they relieve, quality of life they allow to be retained, and function they allow to be preserved. However, with great power comes great responsibility and the fact remains that the opioid class of pain medications is the most powerful and most effective that we have to offer our patients who are in pain. In the case presented here, we will outline the severity of the patient’s polytrauma to illustrate the various and unique etiologies of the patient’s acute and chronic pain which were successfully treated with progressively lower potency opioid regimens. This allowed the patient to successfully complete multiple rehabilitation courses and return to functioning well as a member of society.

Case Description

16 year old Caucasian male was found pinned down in the middle of a field status post tractor rollover where he sustained an unstable pelvis and organ evisceration injury. He was alert and oriented with a Glasgow Coma Scale of 15 at the scene but ST upon arrival to our Level 1 trauma center hospital. He was intubated and given 4 liters intravenous bolus during air evacuation but remained hemodynamically unstable. Patient was intubated and given 4 liters intravenous bolus during air evacuation but remained hemodynamically unstable. Patient was taken emergently to the operating room for exploratory laparotomy with pelvic packing, femoral arterial shunt and dressing changes. Following discharge, he continued to be in pain. In the case presented here, we will outline the severity of the patient’s polytrauma and pain. In contrast, he had the drive to live and perennated, not just living day to day but purposefully doing just that. Special thanks to the patient and his family for consenting to this case report and allowing those who read this study to learn from his experiences.

Discussion

This patient is the perfect illustration of a success story from a rehabilitation and pain management perspective. Excellent literature exists about the rehabilitative, and pain management components of care with constant awareness of the patient’s multifactored pain levels resulted in proper tapering to overcome dependence issues and adverse effects. The rehabilitation psychology staff, constant support from his family, and his spiritual beliefs are also key components of his success. Despite these strong motivating factors, it would not have been possible to participate, and progress in various therapies during the rehabilitation process without his pain being well controlled. He demonstrated how high doses of opioid therapy was not addictive when given to treat pain. Many patients would have initially lost the will to live given the severity of his polytrauma and pain. In contrast, he had the drive to live and perennated, not just living day to day but purposefully doing just that. Special thanks to the patient and his family for consenting to this case report and allowing those who read this study to learn from his experiences.

Resources