

Tramadol

Tramadol is less effective than morphine and offers no advantage in the treatment of acute pain. Unless the patient has a proven allergy, morphine is the drug of choice and can safely be used for all causes of severe pain not controlled by oral analgesia including ureteric and biliary colic. Morphine can be given subcutaneously, intramuscularly or intravenously. Repeated small doses titrated until the patient is comfortable minimise the risk of respiratory depression.

Morphine may cause histamine release, but true anaphylaxis is very rare. Tramadol, however, has been associated with life-threatening angioneurotic oedema. It also has potentially serious interactions with commonly used drugs, especially selective

serotonin reuptake inhibitors with which it can precipitate a serotonergic syndrome.

Conclusion

The emergency drug supply system is a valuable resource for general practitioners. The best outcomes occur when the patients are expeditiously transported to a hospital. In time-critical cases, however, a general practitioner may be required to respond urgently to an acutely ill patient. It is essential that the drugs in the doctor's bag should reflect current best emergency practice, efficacy and safety. With these principles in mind, the current doctor's bag emergency drug scheme should be reviewed. <

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FURTHER READING

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Cover story



Australian Prescriber has been published by the NPS since 2002. In 2010 the National Prescribing Service changed its name to NPS: Better choices, Better health, and decided to rebrand all its publications. As the previous design of *Australian Prescriber* first

appeared in 2004, there was also a need for an update.

Health professionals and students participated in the research for the new design of *Australian Prescriber*. Their comments have helped to create a layout which

will make it easy for readers to find all the information which interests them.

In addition to the summary of each article, key points and self-test questions will be highlighted. There is more white space in the design to aid readability, particularly for busy health professionals.

Since 2010 *Australian Prescriber* has used paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. The new stock also comes from responsible sources.

Our new design includes not only the NPS brand, but also elements from the history of *Australian Prescriber*. The capsules on the cover recall the first design of the journal in 1975. Although it is in a stylised form, the eye of Horus from 1994 is still there, looking to the future of medicine and *Australian Prescriber*.