NURSING PROCESS FOCUS  Clients Receiving H2-receptor Antagonist Therapy

Assessment

Prior to administration:
- Obtain a complete health history including allergies, drug history, and possible drug interactions.
- Assess client for signs of GI bleeding.
- Obtain vital signs.
- Assess level of consciousness.
- Obtain results of CBC, liver, and renal function tests.

Potential Nursing Diagnoses

- Falls, Risk for, related to adverse effect of drug
- Knowledge, Deficient, related to drug therapy
- Pain, Acute, related to gastric irritation from ineffective drug therapy
- Nutrition, Altered, Less than Body Requirements, related to adverse effects of drug

Planning: Client Goals and Expected Outcomes

The client will:
- Report episodes of drowsiness, dizziness.
- Report recurrence of abdominal pain or discomfort during drug therapy.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the drug’s actions by accurately describing drug side effects and precautions.

Implementation

Interventions and (Rationales)  Client Education/Discharge Planning

- Monitor use of OTC drugs to avoid drug interactions, especially with cimetidine therapy. (Client should not use any OTC medications without consulting with healthcare provider.)  
  Instruct client to consult with healthcare provider before taking other medications or herbal products.
- Monitor level of abdominal pain or discomfort to assess effectiveness of drug therapy. (Abdominal pain or discomfort should decrease with therapy.)  
  Advise client that pain relief may not occur for several days after beginning therapy.
- Monitor client use of alcohol. (Alcohol can increase gastric irritation.)  
  Instruct client to avoid alcohol use.
- Discuss possible drug interactions. (Antacids can decrease the effectiveness of other drugs taken concurrently.)  
  Instruct client to take H2-receptor antagonists and other medications at least 1 hour before antacids.
- Institute effective safety measures regarding falls. (Drugs may cause drowsiness or dizziness.)  
  Instruct client to avoid driving or performing hazardous activities until drug effects are known.
- Explain need for lifestyle changes. (Smoking and certain foods increase gastric acid secretion.)  
  Encourage client to:
  - Stop smoking; provide information on smoking cessation programs.
  - Avoid foods that cause stomach discomfort.
- Observe client for signs of GI bleeding. (Ranitidine does not heal a peptic ulcer; it only decreases acid production; therefore, bleeding may occur from an ulcer.)  
  Instruct client to immediately report episodes of blood in stool or vomitus or increase in abdominal discomfort.

Evaluation of Outcome Criteria

Evaluate the effectiveness of drug therapy by confirming that client goals and expected outcomes have been met (see “Planning”).

- The client reports drowsiness and dizziness.
- The client reports a decrease in occurrence of abdominal pain or discomfort during drug therapy.
- The client demonstrates an understanding of the drug’s actions by accurately describing drug side effects and precautions.

See Table 40.1 for a list of drugs to which these nursing actions apply.

NURSING CONSIDERATIONS

The role of the nurse in H2-receptor antagonist therapy for treatment of peptic ulcer disease involves careful monitoring of a client’s condition and providing education as it relates to the prescribed drug treatment. Because some H2-receptor blockers are available without prescription, assess the client’s use of OTC formulations to avoid duplication of treatment. If using OTC formulations, clients should be advised to seek medical attention if symptoms persist or recur. Persistent epigastric pain or heartburn may be symptoms of more serious disease that requires different medical treatment.

Intravenous preparations of H2-receptor antagonists are occasionally utilized. Because dysrhythmias and hypotension have occurred with IV cimetidine, ranitidine (Zantac) or famotidine (Pepcid) are administered if the IV route is necessary.

Drugs in this class are usually well tolerated. CNS side effects such as dizziness, drowsiness, confusion, and headache are more likely to occur in elderly clients. Assess kidney and liver function. These drugs are mainly excreted...