

WATAG Advisory Note

WA PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG COMMITTEE (WAPDC)

SAFETY ALERT: Ketamine use in the management of acutely aroused adult patients outside of emergency departments

The use of ketamine to treat acutely aroused adult patients outside of emergency departments should only be undertaken in accordance with approved local or national treatment protocols and by experienced clinicians who have the necessary monitoring, resuscitation and pharmacological knowledge to rescue a patient from sedation that is causing airway obstruction and/or cardiorespiratory deterioration.

Background

- The use of ketamine as a sedative by anaesthetists and in emergency departments is supported by the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists.
- Ketamine use is also approved by Australian aeromedical retrieval services as an option to sedate patients 'pre-retrieval' for purposes of transportation.¹
- The 'WAPDC Pharmacological Treatment of Acutely Aroused Adult Patients Guidelines'² which may also be applied in non-emergency department and rural settings, list ketamine as an option that can be administered usually following other treatment failures or in exceptional cases that warrant its earlier administration. In these situations the use of ketamine should only be undertaken by an appropriately trained clinician who is able to monitor patients for side effects and who is able to respond to and rescue a patient from sedation that is causing airway obstruction and/or cardiorespiratory deterioration.



Dr Nathan Gibson
Chair, WAPDC



Dr Christopher Etherton-Beer
Chair, WATAG

References

1. The Acutely Agitated Patient in a Remote Location. Assessment and Management Guidelines - a consensus statement by Australian aeromedical retrieval services. https://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/assets/files/Consensus_Statement_-_The_Acutely_Agitated_Patient_in_a_remote_location.pdf
2. WAPDC Pharmacological Treatment of Acutely Aroused Adult Patients Guidelines