

Gabapentin and Patient-reported Medication Tolerance: A Case Series

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Chris M. Herndon, PharmD, BCACP, FASHP, FCCP Abstract:

Purpose:

There exists no medical literature that reinforces the idea of the development of tolerance to gabapentin when used for peripheral neuropathic pain originating from various different etiologies. Observations noted by clinicians detail some patients reporting a decrease in the efficacy of gabapentin over time. The object of this research study is to identify the presence of possible gabapentinoid analgesic tolerance in patients using these agents for neuropathic pain.

Methods:

Patients of SIHF Health System were identified by the Athena EHR system who received a gabapentin prescription in the last 90 days. Patients from this list who met inclusion and exclusion criteria were then contacted by phone to participate in a short survey.

Results:

Sixteen patients consented to answering the survey, all with a diagnosis of diabetic peripheral neuropathy. Three of these patients responded with answers showing a loss of efficacy of gabapentin over time. The three patients endorsed gabapentin now being less effective than when initiated. All patients reported at least one dose increase in one year.

Conclusions:

This study shows that there are patients who require an increase in gabapentin doses due to a loss of efficacy. This study also highlights the need for more research into the development of tolerance to gabapentin.