



香港麻醉科醫學院
THE HONG KONG COLLEGE OF ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS
(Incorporated as a Charitable Organisation with Limited Liability in Hong Kong since 1989)



Press Release

Statement on the Safe Use of Sedative Drugs

There has been public concern in the community recently regarding the safe use of sedative drugs, in particular propofol. The Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists and the Society of Anaesthetists of Hong Kong would like to make the following statement:

The development of modern anaesthesiology has made complicated major surgery possible. When conducted properly by trained practitioners with appropriate facilities, judicious use of analgesic and sedative drugs can also allow diagnostic or minor surgical procedures to be performed outside the operating room. Some anaesthetic drugs, including propofol, are sometimes used in lower doses for sedation. However, potential serious side effects associated with the use of these drugs include unconsciousness, depressed breathing, seizures and cardiac arrest. These can be lethal if not managed appropriately.

Although there is currently no legal restriction on the use of sedative and analgesic drugs by practitioners who are not specialist anaesthesiologists, our expertise leads us to recommend that practitioners should take the following precautions related to the use of such drugs:

1. Have a thorough understanding of the pharmacology of the drugs to be administered, especially the side effects, and be proficient in managing them.
2. Conduct a thorough health assessment of the patient to determine the suitability for and the most appropriate sedative drugs.
3. Have another medical practitioner or a qualified nurse trained in the provision of sedation and resuscitation to monitor the patient, in addition to the practitioner or nurse who is/are performing the procedure.
4. Have resuscitation drugs and equipment available at the location of the procedure and be familiar with their use.
5. Continuous monitoring of the patient during sedation is mandatory. This should include pulse oximetry, breathing and other vital signs.
6. Keep a detailed record of drugs administered and the patient's vital signs

Patients should be well informed of the risks inherent with the use of these analgesic and sedative drugs. Specialist anaesthetists should be consulted if needed. Guidelines and recommendations regarding the safe use of sedative drugs have been published by various international anaesthetic, medical and surgical organizations, and a guideline is also available from the Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists' web site http://www.hkca.edu.hk/ANS/standard_publications/guidep02.pdf.

The Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists
The Society of Anaesthetists of Hong Kong

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