Syringe Driver Competency Programme

Facilitator’s Guide
Programme aim

To assist Registered Nurses to obtain the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills they require to manage syringe drivers in their place of practice and for enrolled nurses to be competent in checking.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this syringe driver competency package and workshop participants will be able to:

• State the rationale for use of a syringe driver in palliative care
• Educate the patient and family about the use of a syringe driver
• Explain management and safety principles when caring for patients with these devices
• Calculate conversions from oral opioids to subcutaneous opioids
• Identify medications commonly used in syringe drivers in palliative care and the rationale for their use
• Identify medications that should not be given subcutaneously
• Identify the equipment required to set up a syringe driver
• Identify suitable insertion sites for subcutaneous infusions
• Explain which sites are inappropriate for subcutaneous infusion
• Set up an infusion using the Niki T34 syringe driver
• State the observations that need to be made while the syringe driver is in use and their frequency
• Identify alerts and alarms and state corrective action to be taken
• Demonstrate the safe use of a syringe driver and show how to stop an infusion

Who facilitates the programme?

All facilitators should be associated with a specialist palliative care service and have recent clinical experience. The facilitator must be a Registered Nurse familiar with the setting up, administration and management of the Niki T34 syringe drivers.

The educators or facilitators of this course should have appropriate qualifications and/or experience in adult teaching, group facilitation skills and specific knowledge of palliative care.
Structure of the programme

The Syringe Driver Competency Programme consists of three parts:

1. Pre-reading workbook containing rationales, guidelines, drug information and practice calculations.

2. Two-hour workshop consisting of one hour of tutorial based learning and then one hour of hands-on learning with a syringe driver.

3. Attainment of competence. This consists of completing a written test paper and the assessment of practical skills which is completed during the workshop.

Supporting resource material

Available on Hospice New Zealand website:

- The workbook
- PowerPoint presentation
- REM quick guide sheets
- Four written test papers
- Answers to the four written test papers
- Additional drug calculations
- Practical competence assessment form
- Demographic data form
- Certificates of attendance
- Annual update revision sheet
- Saf-T-Intima™ insertion poster
- REM SYSTEMS resource poster
- Extra calculations and case scenarios for practice
- Revision sheet to use in update workshops
- Pre-reading article
Resources and rationales for the programme

**Workbook** – ensures that those participating in the programme have some baseline knowledge of the use and management of syringe drivers. The workbook also contains drug calculations to practise before attending the workshop.

**PowerPoint presentation** – follows the workbook and guides the facilitator logically through the workshop.

**REM Niki T34 quick reference charts** – these act as a quick reference for preparing, administering and managing syringe drivers. These can be downloaded and laminated and are designed to be kept in the syringe driver preparation area.

**Written test papers including drug calculations** – are given to participants either with the workbooks, or at the workshop. The test papers must be completed and form an important part of the assessment of competence. Participants must achieve 100% in the drug calculation section and at least 80% in the written answer section. If participants are having difficulty with the drug calculations they may need assistance and extra time for learning. The participant can be given further drug calculations if needed to demonstrate competence.

**Practical competency assessment form** – this form is used to assess practical competence. It is essential that there is a baseline measure of competence. It is expected that registered nurses already have reached a competent level in such things as hand washing and communicating with patients therefore not all areas of competence are measured in this workshop. The practical assessment is designed to be completed as part of the workshop however this could also be done in the participant’s workplace using a “real” rather than a simulated scenario.

**“Party Pack” containing required equipment** (see required equipment in workbook) for subcutaneous administration – each participant needs to have time to practice in a controlled supportive environment. Participants will gain confidence and knowledge with the use of the equipment needed for use in setting up and maintaining a subcutaneous infusion of medication. Part of the cost of the course should cover the use of materials for the participants to practise with.

**Niki T34 syringe drivers** – ideally enough syringe drivers to allow all participants to have hands-on practice.

**Background reading** – included in this manual are a list of articles and websites that are recommended for a facilitator as background reading.
Process for facilitating a workshop

Facilitators need to:

1. Advertise workshop dates and venues.

2. Register participants onto workshops. A maximum of 10 participants per workshop is recommended to allow time to assess each participant.

3. Send out workbooks and written test papers to each participant approximately two weeks before the workshop.

4. Run the workshop: a two-hour workshop comprising one hour lecture and one hour hands on practical with syringe driver has proved an effective way of providing the required education and training. Workshop should include:
   - Welcome and explanation of the programme
   - Completing the demographic data form
   - PowerPoint – review of material in workbook
   - Hands-on practical
   - Practical competency assessment
   - Completion of evaluation

5. Mark written tests.

6. Send out certificate of attendance.

7. Add participant details to the register if competency is attained.

8. Enter data into the data collection tool on the Hospice New Zealand website.

9. Facilitate annual update sessions to maintain competence.
Competency

Following successful completion of the workshop and written tests the RN/EN will be deemed on that day to be competent. It may be some time before the RN/EN manages a patient/resident with a syringe driver. It is the responsibility of the RN/EN to seek support therefore as necessary to ensure their practice is safe at all times as per the NZ Nursing Council Professional Code of Conduct. This could be achieved by asking a more experience colleague to mentor them and/or contacting their local Specialist Palliative Care service for advice.

To attain certification in subcutaneous therapy each registered nurse is required to:

- Complete the recommended pre reading including completing a written test obtaining 80% minimum in the written component and 100% in the drug calculations.
- Attend a two-hour workshop, during which practical competency is assessed against the criteria in the assessment tool.

Certification of competence

Following successful completion of the workshop a dated Certificate of Attendance is issued, dated no later than the end of the month in which they attended the workshop.

Maintaining certification

Certification can be maintained by attending periodic updates. Hospice New Zealand currently recommends annual updates for nurses occasionally using syringe drivers and alternate years for nurses using syringe drivers routinely. Participants should complete one of the 4 written test papers 2 yearly, so nurses who attend yearly do not need to complete a written test every year.

The annual update provides an opportunity for revision, updating, and demonstrating on going practical competence. Allow approximately an hour for these sessions. An optional revision sheet is included with the facilitator’s resources. This can be used to structure the revision and worked through as a group which generates good discussion and sharing of experiences. Facilitators can choose to focus revision on a particular issue that may have arisen recently in practice in syringe drivers. The revision sheets do not get handed in for marking, participants can keep them with their certificate in their portfolio as evidence of on going learning. It is not usually possible to run workshops and annual update concurrently unless there is more than one facilitator available.

Certificates

Three certificates are included in the resources. Each certificate is slightly different.

- The first certificate is used for successful completion of the initial two-hour workshop.
- The two annual update certificates reflect the differing yearly competency requirements.

Each time a participant completes an annual update their details are updated on the register.

Registration

It is the responsibility of the Hospice palliative care service providing the programme to maintain a competency register.
Evaluation

The Hospice palliative care service providing the programme may ask participants to complete formative evaluation to help inform facilitators on the effectiveness of delivery. They would use their local formative evaluation forms.

Problems or questions

Please contact Anne Morgan, the Practice Advisor at Hospice New Zealand if you have any questions or queries regarding any part of this course. anne@hospice.org.nz or phone 021 521 977.

Maintaining standards

Hospice New Zealand will continue to support a working party that will meet regularly to review evaluations, update and alter the programme as required. Any alterations or changes that may be made with the programme will be passed on to those whose name the programme is registered to. It is the responsibility of the person whose name is registered to inform Hospice New Zealand of any difficulties with facilitating the programme.

Suggested background reading for facilitators

References that may be useful


Websites
www.palliativedrugs.com
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpMUPQ21eEo this video is useful for the insertion of Saf-T-Intimas
Adult learning skills

It is important to acknowledge the characteristics of adult learners.

This section has been adapted from the New Zealand Volunteer Education and Training Manual.

Planning education sessions for adults requires some special considerations which will need to be allowed for.

**Motivation**
Adults typically have high motivation levels – they want to learn and want to get on with it.

**Experience**
A great deal of knowledge and experience is brought by adults to new learning – draw on this to provide affirmation and confidence. Linkage with knowledge from past experiences will encourage learning.

**Unlearning**
Adults have often developed set ideas, beliefs and thinking patterns. Some work may need to be undone to ‘unlearn’ these attitudes or ideas.

**Distraction**
Most people lead busy lives – there are bound to be times when other important events or stresses cause distractions. Educators need to be alert in detecting such problems and provide support and extra help where necessary.

**Learning climate**
A climate where adults can, to some degree, set their own pace of learning will get a much better response than being pressured by the clock or being put in competitive situations. Facilitators need also to be aware that for some participants of this programme, English is their second language. This may mean extra time is allocated, the pace of delivery altered or further explanations required. This would be respectfully undertaken at all times.

Where adults are involved, they should be encouraged to share their own learning and concerns. Both students and teachers set the pace. Pressures of time or over competitive situations are counterproductive to learning. Ground rules for a working agreement are vital for the health of the group, and are set by the group.

**Learning setting**
Make sure participants are physically comfortable and that there is a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. People learn best when:

- They are motivated
- They are involved
- They are challenged
- The experience is satisfying
- They are doing, not listening
- They feel good about themselves
- The climate is non-judgemental
- The physical conditions are comfortable
- They are included in evaluating the programme
- Their contribution or involvement is acknowledged
- Consideration is given to any disabilities eg. Hearing, by the educator speaking very clearly and a little louder

Past experiences trigger emotional responses which impact on learning. Educators need to determine whether support is required immediately or later (it could be helpful to have another hospice person available to assist with this).

There are other teaching ideas available in the Hospice New Zealand Fundamentals of Palliative Care resources.