Press Panel Discussion

Chair

Daehyun Jo
(Daejeon St. Mary’s Hospital, Korea)

Dai-Ik Kwon
(Hankookilbo)
Narcotic analgesics are frequently used for severe pain control. However, Pain is inadequately treated due in part to reluctance about using opioid analgesics and fear that they will be abused. Although international and national expert groups have determined that opioid analgesics are essential for the relief of pain, there are many legal and administrative sanctions against opioid analgesics, and its proper use is disturbed unnecessary fear and misunderstanding about narcotics.

The objective of this study was to find out use pattern of narcotic analgesics in university hospitals in Korea, and to investigate actual situation and problems about prescribing and taking narcotics.
The Narcotic Analgesics licensed by KFDA (Ministry of Food and Drug Safety) are 28 companies’ 219 items. But few people have a good understanding of narcotic analgesics. Whether or not they are always needed is unclear. The government, patients, the public, and the media are all like that in KOREA.

The most common misconception is about addiction and side effects. Most people refuse to take the medicine for fear of addiction and side effects. On the other hand, some patients misuse this medicines. Because the government’s policy is focused on preventing misuse and drug abuse, people who need this medicine don’t know about it. Even cancer patients sometimes refuse painkillers.

According to a survey by the Korean Pain Society, almost two thirds (63%) of the patients surveyed said the doctor explained prescription and the side effects of the drug. But only sixty percent of the respondents said they would follow a doctor’s prescription. There are as many as 40 percent of the patients who refuse to follow the doctor’s order. 63 percent of patients who refused to prescribe said they were afraid of addiction, while the other 31 percent said they were afraid of side effects.

Patients know narcotic analgesic is an issue that could affect them and their families, but how it affects them and what they can do to address it are not well understood. They are afraid because they don’t know.

Public resistance towards medical claims regarding narcotic analgesic is widely thought to stem from public misunderstanding (or ignorance) of drugs. Most people don’t even know the difference between hard drug and narcotic analgesics. The public raises misunderstanding by watching the news of drug-related misuse of drugs such as ‘Propofol’.

The Narcotic Analgesics need to be managed and prescribed by the experts of pain practice. Experts should be able to explain narcotic analgesics to the government, patients and the public. The explanation and persuasion of the doctor is important in the medical field, and the role of the Korea Pain Society for communication will be important for regulators and the public.