

Dr. Bryan White, MD of Hospice Institutes Antidepressant Reduction Protocol for Elderly Patients

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Overseeing care at a number of Hospice facilities across Texas, <u>Dr. Bryan White, MD</u> has helped deliver unparalleled care and specialized services to patients and families for decades. In recent years, he's proposed and instituted a dosage reduction protocol on antidepressant medications for elderly patients at his Hospice and Hospice Plus locations.

<u>Dr. Bryan White, MD of Hospice</u> dedicates his professional time to ensuring patients have a truly individualized approach to care that meets their specific needs. Avoiding the one-size-fits-all approach to care, he instead looks to unique factors in his patients' health standing to deliver appropriate medication dosages.

In the past few years, Dr. Bryan White, MD of Hospice has looked to open forums to propose potential dosage reduction protocols for his patients. Recognizing that many under his care are at a higher risk of negative side effects of these drugs, he proposed new limits on dosages, which were positively received by his peers during the open forums.

Recently, Dr. White instituted a dosage reduction protocol for antidepressant administration for patients in facilities around Texas. The institution of this protocol means a significant reduction of use of unneeded antidepressant medications, especially in nursing home patients. The protocol has been successful in multiple facilities that provide skilled and long term nursing care.

More careful monitoring and administering of antidepressants for nursing homes patients ultimately cuts down on potential threats that would impede on their good health. Today, Dr. Bryan White, MD of Hospice believes too many medical professionals rely heavily on antidepressant medications, often using overly broad dosages when prescribing them to patients. He asks his peers to exercise more caution when prescribing them, especially in elderly patients.

"Antidepressants can do a lot of good for people because they balance out chemicals in the brain called neurotransmitters that determine our mood and how we feel overall," says Dr. Bryan

White, MD of Hospice. "However, they can be over prescribed and often are never reduced or stopped, especially in elderly patients who may not need these medications indefinitely."

For decades, the most popular medicine for psychological treatment have been serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). These types of medications work by suppressing certain negative feelings or thoughts to help patients overcome symptoms of depression. During regular use, they have proven to help people achieve more peaceful sleep regularly, boost their appetite, and enjoy activities with a more positive overall mood. However, they do have their drawbacks, especially in excessive dosages for elderly patients.

SSRIs are typically viewed as much safer than other forms of antidepressants on the market since they don't disturb heart rhythms and don't usually cause harmful side effects like dizziness.

However, because liver health is a particular concern of elderly patients, excessive dosages can have a harmful impact.

"By instituting this new protocol, we can reduce the potential harm of antidepressants," says <u>Dr. Bryan White, MD of Hospice.</u> "Already, it has led to a significant reduction in the use of unneeded antidepressant medications in nursing homes. The protocol has been especially successful in facilities that provide skilled and long term nursing care, helping physicians to prescribe only the safest and most appropriate medications for their elderly patients."

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