

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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ADVANTAGES OF EMBEDA® (MORPHINE SULFATE AND NALTREXONE HYDROCHLORIDE) EXTENDED-RELEASE CAPSULES IN PAIN MANAGEMENT

Dear Editor:

The recent article by Badalamenti et al.¹ regarding the safety of EMBEDA® (morphine sulfate and naltrexone hydrochloride) extended-release capsules provided for highly interesting reading. Interestingly, recent data suggest that EMBEDA has several other advantages over regular morphine, making it an ideal and better alternative to morphine.

For instance, even if the EMBEDA capsules are crushed by potential abusers, the morphine-associated effects such as euphoria are almost attenuated simultaneously with the released sequestered naltrexone.² This greatly hampers the misuse of EMBEDA. In addition, consumption of ethanol does not disrupt the sequestering of naltrexone. Thus, its potential abuse by opioid and alcohol co-abusers is significantly mitigated. When consumed along with 40 percent ethanol, the T_{max} of EMBEDA is reduced by almost 50 percent at 4 hours.³ In addition, food intake does not influence the bioavailability of the EMBEDA capsules.⁴

If administered and used as directed, no withdrawal symptoms are usually seen following use of EMBEDA, as is observed by the relatively low mean Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale scores.⁵ In addition, the appearance of

tolerance to the antiallodynic effects of morphine is markedly reduced by the addition of ultralow-dose naltrexone. Simultaneously, morphine-associated gastrointestinal side effects such as nausea are markedly mitigated by the sequestered naltrexone.⁶

The above examples clearly highlight the additional benefits of EMBEDA, making it a suitable alternative in pain management.

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