

## **Criteria Used to Assess Need for Use of Morphine for Adult Cancer Pain Relief in Kakamega County Referral Hospital, Kenya, Africa**

### **Abstract**

The experience of pain in cancer patients is widely accepted as a major threat to quality of life, and its relief has emerged as a priority in oncology care. Although morphine and other opioids is the mainstay of cancer pain management, patients still suffer from moderate to severe pain. This paper investigated the criteria used to assess need for use of morphine for pain relief in cancer patients in Kakamega county referral hospital. The study used a cross-sectional research design. Target population was 295 which included physicians (medical doctors), nurses and clinical officers working at the Kakamega County General Hospital. The study employed focused group discussion and questionnaires to collect data. The study findings revealed that prescribers of morphine face challenges and FGD indicated that health care providers often create barriers to effective pain management. Time constraints and insufficient knowledge regarding pain management of medical professionals were the most commonly encountered barriers to effective pain management for physicians, clinical officers and nurses. There was a significant relationship between criteria used and morphine use in cancer pain relief ( $p=0.013$ ) The study concluded that for one to use morphine to control cancer pain amongst adult, they should consider; the dose and length of time allowed by a single prescription, challenges faced when prescribing morphine, that morphine can only be sold to institutions that have at least a medical officer and the actual cost of morphine.