



Overview of Parenteral Therapy in Naturopathic Care

Background

Parenteral Therapy is a safe and effective way to enhance the clinical effectiveness of naturopathic therapies. At its core, naturopathic medicine seeks to stimulate the human body's innate ability to heal itself. Parenteral Therapy is an advanced application of this concept, currently permitted in all regulated provinces, and in keeping with the training and approach of the profession.

Naturopathic medical education provides the skills and knowledge to safely and effectively deliver Parenteral Therapy. This training includes a minimum of three years approved pre-med education and four years of full time naturopathic medical training and clinical sciences from an accredited College. As well, NDs in Ontario must successfully complete an approved certification course and pass a Board exam to practice Parenteral Therapy.

The BDDT-N Parenteral Therapy policy establishes the permitted therapies and substances currently permitted for use in Ontario. The Naturopathy Act awards NDs the Controlled Act of "administer, by injection or inhalation, a prescribed substance." However, the Naturopathy Act does not award the authority to prescribe or compound substances. This creates substantial uncertainty about how NDs will maintain access to required natural substances, particularly in the rapidly changing regulatory environment at the federal level.

Importance of Parenteral Therapy to Patient Care

Parenteral Therapy provides a means to blend many of the modalities inherent to the scope of practice of NDs, and a route of administration that promotes a rapid and effective response, including immediate changes in metabolic processes that cannot be achieved through oral administration of the same substances. The intravenous administration of vitamins, minerals, amino acids and other natural substances is particularly important for patients who have limited or impaired absorptive ability through the GI tract.

Examples of evidence-based application of Parenteral Therapies in naturopathic care are:

- Vitamin C in Cancer (preclinical data and case studies)
- Glutathione in Parkinson's disease (case studies and small clinical trials)
- Mistletoe therapy in cancer (clinical trials and meta analysis)
- Milk Thistle liver disease and mushroom poisoning (case studies, pre clinical data)
- Vitamin C in diabetic ulcer care (case studies)
- Vitamin C in cardiovascular disease (clinical trials and consecutive case studies)
- Chelation therapy in heavy metal detoxification (clinical trials US FDA approval)
- Chelation therapy for cardiovascular disease (clinical trial, current large scale multicentre clinical trial in the United States.

Parenteral Therapies are also used to address a number of other conditions, including cardiovascular disease, chronic fatigue, autism, and HIV. Naturopathic medicine's unique approach to care is an essential complement to conventional medicine, and an important choice for patients who may have exhausted conventional options. Naturopathic therapies can work synergistically with conventional medicine to reduce dosage, the number of medications required, and other co-interventions, providing the basis for collaborative care. For example, for patients with diabetes, NDs may use an IV multivitamin and mineral formula or EDTA chelation to treat diabetic ulcers and prevent amputations, and IV nutrient therapies to improve the neuropathy associated with diabetes.

Ensuring the Future of Parenteral Therapy for Naturopathic Doctors

As a result, limits on the current provision of Parenteral Therapy, including access to substances, could result in a loss of care for patients with the most acute care needs, particularly those seeking the unique approach and expertise of NDs. Many natural substances used by NDs in Ontario for Parenteral Therapy are currently on restricted schedules, or have the potential to be in the near future due to changes at the federal level. To meet the unique needs of each patient, NDs often compound or order the compounding of the intravenous solution. As well, emergency medicines required to respond to emergency care in office are on restricted schedules. Therefore, NDs require the authority to prescribe, dispense and compound in order to maintain current scope of practice.

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