

INTRATHECAL ANALGESIA SYNERGISM

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Little progress has been made in intrathecal analgesia since the discovery of spinal cord mu opioid receptors by Tony Yaksh's laboratory in the 1970s. Intrathecal morphine has been in use now for approximately 30 years. The major progress has been in the understanding of the phenomenon of intrathecal granuloma formation not in improved analgesic pharmacotherapy. Other analgesics have been used clinically such as other opioids, local anaesthetics, clonidine, baclofen, ziconotide and midazolam. Only morphine for pain and baclofen for spasticity is approved for use by the FDA (U.S. Federal Drug Administration). This talk will introduce the concept of Spinal Analgesic Combination Chemotherapy, a term developed by Prof. Michael Cousins RNSH, and explore the rationale for combining analgesic agents.

The concepts of additivity and synergism will be explored and their graphical representation with isobolograms explained. Data from the Hunter Pain Clinic's log of intrathecal analgesia patients will be presented outlining this approach.