

Common Drugs Used in Critical Care

Adrenaline: several uses, e.g. Anaphylaxis. Commonly used in critical care as a vasoconstrictor to treat hypotension and give circulatory support. Can be administered as a bolus or more long term via a continued infusion via a central line.

Alfentanil: used for analgesia and suppresses respiratory activity in patients receiving invasive ventilation.

Clonidine: used as a sedative agent to wean patients off deeper sedating agents.

Dexmedetomidine: used as a sedative agent to wean patients off deeper sedating agents.

Flolan: anticoagulant only used with dialysis (CVVHDF)

Insulin: hyperglycaemia occurs in most critically ill patients. When admitted to ITU, all patients are commenced on infusions of 20% Glucose and intensive insulin regime until alternative nutrition is established.

Metaraminol: a vasoconstrictor used to treat hypotension which can be given via a peripheral vein.

Noradrenaline: a vasoconstrictor used to treat hypotension. Administered by continuous intravenous infusion via a central line.

Phenylephrine: a vasoconstrictor used to treat hypotension. Can be given via a peripheral vein.

Potassium: electrolyte used in the correction of hypokalaemia (low potassium). Can either be taken orally, or more commonly in critical care, via a continuous intravenous infusion via a central line. See potassium protocol & policy.

Propofol: sedation used in ITU given continuously via intravenous infusion.

Ranitidine: H₂-receptor antagonist used as a prophylaxis for gastro-oesophageal reflux.

Remifentanyl: sedation. Has a much shorter duration onset than Alfentanyl, often used overnight when patients not quite ready for extubation

Tinzaparin: anticoagulant used for the prevention of venous thromboembolism

Vasopressin: is a drug which has many uses. Its use in critical care is in support of other vasoconstrictors, usually Noradrenaline.

Antibiotics: all antibiotics are commenced and discontinued on advice of the consultant microbiologist who conducts a ward round daily. Some of the more common ones are listed below:

- Ciprofloxacin
- Clindamycin
- Co-Amoxiclav
- Fluconazole
- Gentamycin
- Meropenem
- Tazocin (PipercillinTazobactam)
- Septin