QUESTION 31

A young woman with advanced ovarian cancer presents with nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. Her abdominal X-rays are shown below.

Which of the following treatments is most likely to improve her symptoms?

A. Ondansetron  
B. Domperidone  
C. Octreotide  
D. Hyoscine  
E. Prochlorperazine

This woman has a bowel obstruction – multiple air-fluid levels of erect AXR and dilated bowel on supine AXR.

Given this, pro-kinetic agents are contraindicated. These include the dopamine agonists (domperidone and prochlorperazine as well as metoclopramide).

Ondansetron is a 5HT3 antagonist. Not sure if this is a pro-kinetic agent but suspect that it is.

Hyoscine and octreotide are both used to help control nausea and vomiting in malignant bowel obstructions.

Hyoscine is an anticholinergic. It is helpful in controlling symptoms of colic also. It acts by reducing gastric and intestinal secretions that contribute to abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting.

Octreotide selectively inhibits secretion of fluids and electrolytes into the gut lumen and is usually used when other measures fail in palliative cases.
Palliative Care Guidelines Recommend:

- Hyoscine to reduce colic
- Haloperidol 0.5-2.5mg orally or subcutaneously bd for nausea and/or
- Cyclizine or
- Levomepromazine
- If symptoms persist then octreotide is the next option

Cyclizine and levomepromazine are available under the special access scheme in Australia but are otherwise unregistered.

The correct answer is C.