

An investigation of the attitudes and opinions of community pharmacists on extending the current services to patients with opioid dependence.

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Introduction

Scottish Data

- 1998 to 2003 rate of prescriptions for methadone mixture increased from 40 per 1000 population to 72 per 1000 population (67% increase in number of prescriptions)¹
- 1995² and 2000³: surveys carried out
- April 2001: Buprenorphine approved
- 2004 to 2005: 14,998 new patients reported to the Scottish Drug Misuse Data base

Aims and objectives of this survey

- Aim
 - To determine the attitudes and opinions of community pharmacists on managing and delivering services for drug misusers.
- Objectives
 - Determine the number and the demographics of the pharmacies providing opioid treatment services in Scotland for drug misusers.
 - Identify the services offered to patients with opioid dependence in each pharmacy.
 - Determine how the services are delivered.
 - **Investigate the attitudes and opinions of the pharmacists on extending the services currently provided.**

Method

- Data collection November and December 2006
- Adapted from NSW questionnaire for use in Scotland
- Questionnaire – validity, content
- Pilot sample - 50 randomly selected pharmacies
- All registered pharmacies in Scotland (excluding pilot)n=1125
- Two reminders at 4 weekly intervals
- SPSS V 13 for data analysis

Results : General

- Response rate 51.3% (n=577)
 - 60.7% female
 - 48.5% ≤ 35 years old
 - 44.9% qualified for ≤10 years
 - 63.5% worked in current pharmacy ≤ 5 years
 - 32.6% small independent pharmacies, 48.5% large multiples
- 87.5% dispensed methadone
 - 25% supervised daily consumption
 - 61.1% supervised daily consumption with take home dose for Sunday
- 31.5% dispensed buprenorphine
 - 4.4% supervised consumption

Results: Extended Services

- Pharmacists would be somewhat or strongly encouraged to increase their numbers
 - more referrals to pharmacies (63.7%)
 - copy of the patient's care plan (67.8%)
 - easier recording systems (71.3%)
 - more support from local Drug and Alcohol services (73.8%)
 - ability to return unstable clients to clinic (77.8%)
 - more integration with other healthcare professionals (78.4%)
 - confident the patients were stable (79.1)
 - increased financial return (82.3%)

Results: Extended Services continued

- Naloxone
 - 18% pharmacists thought they should hold a supply of naloxone injection for administration in an emergency.
- However
 - 38.1% pharmacists thought they should be trained to administer it in an emergency
 - 25.1% did not feel confident in identifying the symptoms of overdose

Conclusion

- Community pharmacy services to drug misusers could be extended if appropriate training and support is provided.
 - Access to patient specific information
 - Integration with other healthcare professionals
 - Appropriate remuneration
- A quarter of the pharmacists did not feel competent in identifying the signs of opioid toxicity which may relate to their unfavourable response to stocking naloxone for use in emergencies.
- A perceived training need in the administration of naloxone in an emergency was identified.

Further work

- Continue collaboration with NSW.
- Investigate the education and training needs of pharmacists and drug misusers with regard to potential new services.
- Collaboration with Glasgow regarding Naloxone pilot - recommends supply of naloxone to be opened up to community pharmacies.
- Investigate supervision of buprenorphine consumption on pharmacy premises.

Questionnaire

- 40 main questions
- Open and closed questions
- 7 sections
 - **Your pharmacy**
 - Treatment delivery
 - Take away doses
 - Pharmacotherapy
 - Pharmacotherapy diversion
 - Prescribing doctors
 - About you

References

1. Scottish Executive 2005. Prevention and treatment of substance misuse. Delivering the Right Medicine: a strategy for Scotland.
2. Matheson, C. Bond, C.M. and Hickey, F., 1999. Prescribing and dispensing for drug misusers in primary care: current practice in Scotland. *Family Practice*, **16**(4), PP.375-379
3. Matheson, C. Pitcairn, J., Bond. C.M., Van Teilingen, E. and Ryan, M., 2003. General practice management of illicit drug users in Scotland: a national survey. *Addiction*, **98**(1), pp 119-126