

GP update



Organisation News

From the 1st April 2019 the service has been run exclusively by EDP Drug and Alcohol Services.

We have a new Nurse Lead – Paloma Kiley. She comes with a long history of substance misuse experience, and will be a welcome addition to our clinical service.



Educational Bit

Addiction to prescribed opioids is an increasing problem. If we follow the trend in the US (as is our habit), things are likely to continue to get worse.

What indicators should alert us that our patients may have a problem with opiate medication use?

Here are some possibilities taken from [the Royal College of Anaesthetists](#):

- Repeatedly losing medication or prescriptions.
- The repeated seeking of prescriptions for opioids with no review by a clinician.
- Resisting referral to acute specialists about complex conditions or failing to attend specialist appointments, including specialist addiction clinics.
- Deteriorating social function including at work and at home.
- Seeking opioids from different doctors and other prescribers. This can take place with GP practices, often identifying locum doctors and doctors unfamiliar with their case. This may be associated with attempting unscheduled visits.

This list is not exhaustive, and further indicators can be found via the link above. If your patient is misusing opioids through illicit sources, internet or excess over the counter opioids please refer in to Together for support.



Links

[Follow this link for UK guidelines on clinical management of drug misuse and dependence](#)

For further reading and advice on reducing opioid regimens follow these links :

[Live Well With Pain resources](#)

[The Royal College of Anaesthetists - opioid awareness](#)

[Brain Man videos \(these are great\)](#)



Contacts

Together's main contact number which is also the self-referral number:

0800 233 5444

and choose the relevant option.

Specialist doctors contact details:

North Devon:

Dr Harry Waters (Clinical Lead)

Email : h.waters1@nhs.net

Exeter, Mid and East:

Dr Samantha Cole GPwSI

Email : samcole@nhs.net

South Devon:

Dr Peter Friend GPwSI

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Thoughts from Clinical Lead

If you suspect that a patient is misusing/ dependent on prescribed medication, book them for a medication review. If they avoid a medication review this can add to concerns. Contact your pharmacist to help if you have one. These patients are different to others as their patient choice can be unsafe.

If a patients' prescribing becomes unsafe then ensure there is a review plan. A good rule of thumb is to make one change to improve safety per review. This can be a small change such as providing medication safety information, communicating clear prescribing boundaries, reviewing what medication is on repeat, explaining how you would respond to future situations eg early requests for medication, increasing how often medication is picked up, reducing doses (usually gradually) or stopping risky combinations of medications.

Maintaining a therapeutic relationship is great. However sometimes safety concerns means you do not have a choice other than to act against the patient's wishes. This is an accepted part of good addiction care.

If you would like to give feedback regarding this bulletin please contact KerrieClifford@edp.org.uk