Specialist Pharmacy Service

NHS

System Safety Update - Opioids

Communication of urgent / topical safety issues March 23

Signposting to resources - Opioids

The first stop for professional medicines advice



RECENT NEWS, UPDATES, ALERTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

SPS Medication Safety Update

A slide deck resource collating the latest medication safety communications and publications to inform, support and inspire medication safety improvements.

Management of National Patient Safety Alerts

Supporting information for providers to manage National Patient Safety Alerts

Withdrawal of pholcodine-containing products

Following the conclusion of a review of post-marketing safety data by the MHRA, all pholcodine-containing medicines are being recalled and withdrawn from the UK as a precaution.

OPIOID RESOURCES

Sharing examples of good practice when having challenging conversations about opioids with patients

Dr Nat Wright & Dr Caroline Watson share their experiences about how to have positive and constructive consultations with patients on long term opioids

Opioids – the patient voice

A recorded interview with Louise Trewern discussing her personal experience with opioids and withdrawal

Live well with pain

Resources for clinicians and healthcare professionals working with people with pain

Opioids Aware

Resource for patients and healthcare professionals to support prescribing of opioid medicines for pain

OPIOID RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Optimising personalised care for adults prescribed medicines associated with dependence or withdrawal symptoms

NHSE have proposed actions to help systems develop plans that can support people who are taking medicines associated with dependence and withdrawal symptoms

Polypharmacy in older people: A guide for healthcare professionals

All Wales Medicines Strategy Group provides practical guides for stopping medications including benzos & Z-drugs, opioids in non-cancer pain and gabapentinoids in neuropathic pain

Comparative effectiveness and safety of analgesic medicines for adults with acute non-specific low back pain: systematic review and network meta-analysis

A BMJ published article related to opioid use in patients with back pain

MEDICATION SAFETY RELATED PUBLICATIONS

World Patient Safety Day 2023: Engaging Patients for Patient Safety

The theme this year is in recognition of the crucial role that patients, families and caregivers play in the safety of healthcare

Challenges and Strategies for Patient Safety in Primary Care: A Qualitative Study

Key safety issues identified included the lack of interoperability among health information systems, clinician-patient communication failures, and challenges with medication reconciliation.

HSIB interim report explores impact of staff wellbeing on patient safety

This report on staff wellbeing across urgent and emergency care systems shows a strong link between patient safety and wellbeing and HSIB makes a recommendation that this be included as a critical component of patient safety in the NHS Patient Safety Strategy.

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Courts and Tribunals Judiciary

NHS

PREVENTION OF FUTURE DEATHS REPORT

Deceased worked for Transport for London and had an accident over 20 years ago injuring her back and resulting in continuing chronic back pain for which she took prescribed medication. She was prescribed large doses of gabapentin, tramadol and amitriptyline alongside fentanyl patches and diazepam. Family report that she was not very good at managing this medication. Cause of death - Likely inadvertent overdose (a fall may well have contributed)

Coroners concerns

- Polypharmacy including opiates represents a severe safety risk in patients with a iatrogenic drug dependency.
- Coroner identified the challenges managing patients with chronic pain - a scenario that seems to be an invidious one for GP's and patients alike
- Changes required – including the need to rationalise or reduce the medications
- Actions required system wide

Ref: 2023-0070