

Appendix 31 – Structured Medication Reviews including opioids

HCP Structured Medication Reviews

A Structured Medication Review (SMR) is an opportunity for individuals to discuss their medicines with a qualified clinician and provides:

- A review of all medicines to identify overlapping prescribing or drug interactions
- Ability to give extra information on what medicines are for
- Opportunity to discuss side effects of medicines
- Identification of problems associated with medicines

Faculty of Pain Medicine Guidance

- Patients who may benefit from opioids in the long term will demonstrate improvement in activity levels, pain intensity and sleep
- Patients who do not achieve useful pain relief from opioids within 2-4 weeks are unlikely to gain benefit in the long-term
- Short-term efficacy does not guarantee long term efficacy
- Data regarding improvement in quality of life with long term opioid use are inconclusive
- There is no evidence for efficacy of high dose opioids in long term pain
- Before increasing total opioid dosage to 50 morphine milligram equivalent/day, clinicians should pause and carefully reassess evidence of individual benefits and risks as the benefits beyond 50 morphine milligram equivalent/day are not going to be significant

Risk factors to consider during SMR

Patient Factors

- Depression, anxiety, and other mental health diagnoses
- Previous history of alcohol or substance misuse
- Previous history of opioid misuse

Drug Factors

- High doses (>50 mg/day oral morphine)
- Multiple opioids
- Multiple formulations of opioids
- More potent opioids
- Concurrent benzodiazepines/ sedative drugs

Top Tips

Questions for patients taking pain medications

- Do the pain medications allow you to improve your function or sleep better?
- Do you experience any side effects? Are you aware of your medications' side effects?
- Have you taken more doses than prescribed?
- During the past month have you often felt subdued, depressed, or hopeless?

Offer other interventions

- Lifestyle advice, including diet and exercise, and supported self-management of pain
- Improving protection against potentially harmful over-use of common analgesics such as paracetamol and NSAIDs available over the counter
- Enhance public understanding of self-management of pain and direct them to sources of support including referral to specialists
- Opening the way to an extended use of assessment instruments to identify the risk of persistent pain
- Signposting psychological and other care providers or facilitating patient use of relevant computer-based services

Scan for more guidance and resources



This document has been developed by Salford Pain Centre and Manchester Pain Collaborative with support from Health Innovation Manchester