

Contraception Referral Pathway

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Background: Following cessation of illicit substance use, stabilisation in treatment and/or pregnancy, menstrual cycles and sexual activity of clients of childbearing age may change. This diverse group of clients face difficulty accessing contraception in the community. [1] Clients without contraception are at increased risk of unplanned pregnancies and complications of prenatal substance use exposure. Evidence supports the use of long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), particularly for drug and alcohol (D&A) clients as LARC is not user dependent. [2]

Description of Model of Care/Intervention:

Intervention: A referral pathway to increase access to contraception for clients of childbearing age with a uterus at St George D&A Service and improve staff knowledge about LARC to facilitate such referrals.

Model of care: D&A clients can be referred for contraception through the St George Hospital Women's and Children's Gynaecology outpatient clinic and referred to St George Hospital's inpatient Obstetric and Gynaecological team for termination of pregnancy. St George Drug & Alcohol clinicians will be trained in administering LARC on site.

Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation: A staff survey identified gaps in clinician knowledge and confidence in providing care regarding contraception. The intervention assists clinicians identify/refer clients who may not otherwise access contraceptive support. This intervention was acceptable to staff and strengthened networks between D&A and hospital services.

Conclusion and Next Steps: Next steps include client and follow up staff surveys, further staff education, evaluation of contraception discussions in Global Care Plans, clinicians trained in administering LARC, and developing an Implanon record book.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: None to declare.

References: [1] Best E, Lokuge B, Dunlop A, Dunford, A. Unmet need for postpartum long-acting reversible contraception in women with substance use disorders and/or socioeconomic disadvantage. Aust N Z J Obstet Gynaecol. 2021 April; 61(2): 304-309.

[2] Day CA, Bonomo Y, Burns L, Assam R, Curry K, Mooney-Somers J, et al. Providing appropriate treatment and care to people with alcohol problems: A summary for key specific populations. Med J Aust. 2021 Oct 4; 215(Suppl 7): S21–S27.