

Development and Content of a Depot Buprenorphine Training Package for NSW Community Pharmacists

Authors:

Hillman JM¹, Moles RJ¹

¹*Sydney Pharmacy School, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney, AUSTRALIA*

Presenting author: joel.hillman@sydney.edu.au

Introduction: Substance-related health priorities include increasing community-based care and decreasing public service pressure. Community pharmacists are ideally placed to administer depot buprenorphine as opioid agonist therapy (OAT).

Abstract: Community pharmacists provide most OAT dosing in Australia. Depot buprenorphine is an important newer OAT formulation which until recently was administered only by clinics. Digital education materials comprising about 2 hours were prepared in consultation with addiction physicians, nurses, and pharmacists, for use in a government-initiated pilot implementation of NSW community pharmacist administration of depot buprenorphine.

Technical concepts included: buprenorphine pharmacology; pharmaceutics; clinical considerations for depot OAT; pregnancy and organ disease; withdrawal identification and quantification; overdose identification and management using naloxone; clinical documentation and communication; NSW legislation; and delivering depot OAT care. Social concepts included: safe consumer language; accessible medicine information; opportunistic care; proactive needs screening; and linkage to care. A vast majority achieved required 85% pass mark on post-training assessment. Practical experience opportunities included dummy injecting kits. Pharmacists were satisfied with and felt prepared by brief depot buprenorphine training. Critically, OAT client service evaluation suggests high satisfaction with interpersonal engagement and injection technique. This research informs future projects and demonstrates training can produce palatable pharmacist depot buprenorphine administration.

Discussions and Conclusions: Brief blended delivery training was feasible and acceptable to community pharmacists and developed skills required to administer depot buprenorphine to the satisfaction of OAT clients.

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