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Hi All. A nice short Newsletter this month you will be glad to hear as we have (hopefully) all been on our holidays.....

Clozapine Monitoring / Shared Care Protocols

We have become aware that some Secondary Care Clinicians are approaching practices individually wishing to discuss them undertaking this monitoring.

As you know, clozapine is considered to be a dangerous medication and can result in neutropenia/agranulocytosis in 3-4% of patients on therapy. It is impossible to predict who will be affected and so blood monitoring is mandatory and a script can only be dispensed against a valid blood result and in accordance with the product licence. In addition, there is a requirement for the Consultant psychiatrist, patient, pharmacists and dispensing pharmacy to be registered with the drug company and there are national standards for the monitoring.

Practices should not feel under pressure to agree to undertake prescribing/monitoring of any medication. In Tayside, the Medicines Advisory Group, which is a sub group of the Area Drug and Therapeutics Committee, decides whether a medication is safe and suitable for prescribing/monitoring by primary care via shared care protocols/agreements which a practice/GP is under no obligation to undertake. The medication is then added to the NPT LES list if agreed by the Associate Medical Director, Primary Care and practices choose to undertake the monitoring/prescribing or not as per any LES.

Please advise us if your practice if your practice is being affected and you have concerns

Being Cited for Court

Due to the number of emails/ calls from Practices about this recently we are aware that this is a hot topic, particularly when short notice is given or the date keeps being changed or cancelled.

We are hoping to arrange a meeting in the near future with the Local Fiscals office to raise the various concerns you have brought to our attention.

In the meantime our advice is to try and contact the Fiscals Department that the citation was issued from explaining the difficulties this causes you – we usually find they try to be as accommodating as they can.

You should also make them aware at the outset that you would have to employ a locum for “the whole period they may require you” and they would have to fund this regardless of whether you were called or not as the Locum has to be paid unless cancelled well in advance.

Prisoner Discharges / Methadone Prescriptions

We thought you might find the following information useful when dealing with this group of patients.

- All prisoners are liberated with 5-days' worth of medication.
- If they are prescribed methadone, then a community prescriber is identified for them – in Tayside this is TSMS.
- The practice they were registered with prior to admission to prison does not get a letter.
- If they are sentenced for 6 months or more, they are automatically registered with the prison practice. Patients in prison for less than 6 months are seen as temporary residents.

The prison healthcare service are currently working on putting a process in place for discharge letters but this is proving to be quite challenging and it looks like they will have to give the patient the letter themselves to take to their GP in the initial stages.

All practices are welcome to telephone the service for confirmation of medication if they register a patient who was previously with the prison practice.

The practice will also receive a version of their Vision summary as normal with patients registering from another practice.

Exemption from Jury Service

We have recently had a couple of queries from Practices about whether or not they have to complete these for patients, and if they do can they charge for this as private work.

The answer to this is that you cannot charge as it is one of the certificates in the Regulations (page 160, number 5.) that you have to complete and cannot charge for.

There is a list of these certificates on our website, www.taysidelmc.co.uk , and also in the Template Letters booklet that we sent to Practices last year.

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Medical Secretary

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