



AH1.2014 Manage the prescription of controlled drugs for substance users

OVERVIEW

This standard is about managing the prescription of controlled drugs to substance users as part of their treatment plan. It covers both reduction and maintenance prescribing. Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

Version No 2

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will need to know and understand:

1. legal, organisational and policy requirements relevant to your role and the activities being carried out
2. how to make a clinical assessment and carry out tests to establish the individual's dependence in collaboration with the individual
3. the importance of prescribing controlled drugs to substance users as part of a wider treatment plan and how the use of controlled drugs complements other psychological, social and medical interventions
4. the importance of regular liaison with other services involved, and appropriate ways of maintaining this liaison
5. evidence based national guidelines and local protocols for the prescription of controlled drugs
6. the clinical governance arrangements within your organisation, how they operate and your responsibilities in relation to this
7. types, properties, functions, effects, indications and contra-indications of controlled drugs that can be used in the treatment of drug dependency
8. methods of drugs administration
9. how to calculate the correct dose of the drugs and frequency of administration
10. how to relate the prescription to the individual's condition and treatment plan
11. how to obtain a prescription pad for prescribing controlled drugs for drug dependency and when a licence is required
12. the correct documentation to be used when prescribing controlled drugs and the information required
13. the importance of keeping prescription documentation in a safe place
14. the importance of supervising the consumption of controlled drugs

15. the importance of regular liaison with the dispensing pharmacist and other healthcare professionals involved in the individual's care
16. how to record prescriptions clearly and accurately on appropriate documentation
17. how to review prescribing practice in view of new guidelines and/or evidence
18. the importance of keeping full and accurate records, and how to do so in line with organisational requirements
19. the principle of confidentiality and the implications for your practice
20. the principles of equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice and how they are applied
21. the importance of carrying out regular clinical reviews of the individual's progress, and how to do so
22. the importance of carrying out regular reviews of prescribing practice, and how to do so
23. the appropriate clinical supervisor to consult when you are unsure about the drugs to be prescribed or your level of competence in relation to your role in the prescribing process
24. the range of different substances and their effects
25. how to provide advice and guidance relating to the safe storage of drugs and the need to consider safeguarding issues where people in receipt of drugs have parental responsibilities

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

You must be able to do the following:

1. keep prescription documentation in a safe place and maintain an audit trail of prescriptions for all controlled drugs
2. check that dependency has been confirmed using a combination of clinical assessment and testing
3. liaise with other services and check the individual's medical history to ensure that no other clinician is prescribing controlled drugs for the individual
4. ensure controlled drugs are only prescribed to substance users as part of a wider treatment plan with specific goals
5. ensure that the prescription of controlled drugs is considered in the context of other planned psychological, social and medical interventions
6. follow guidelines and protocols, where available, in the selection of the type of medication, induction regime, dosage, frequency of dispensing and frequency of administration
7. ensure controlled drugs are prescribed in line with the individual's treatment plan and condition
8. consult an appropriate clinical supervisor, if you are unsure about the drugs to be prescribed or your level of competence in relation to your role in the prescribing process
9. where required, ensure a licence has been obtained for prescribing the controlled drugs
10. complete the relevant documentation for prescriptions in accordance with prescribing guidelines
11. ensure there is no blank space on the form in which further items could be added

12. agree the dispensing regime with the pharmacist and liaise regularly about the specific individual and the prescribing regime
13. make yourself available to take emergency telephone calls from the pharmacist in cases of a prescription error
14. record the prescription for controlled drugs on the appropriate monitoring record
15. ensure that records of the individual's treatment are available only to those authorised to see them
16. take part in regular clinical reviews of the individual's progress including compliance with the prescribing regime
17. review prescribing practice in view of new guidelines and/or evidence

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This National Occupational Standard was developed by Skills for Health. This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: HWB7 Interventions and treatments