*One-year review of opioid prescribing*

Purpose:

If opioid therapy is required for longer than 12 months, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) requires clinical review of the case and support by a second medical practitioner. The standards required for evaluation for the PBS review have not been documented.

For more information, please refer to the RACGPs [Prescribing drugs of dependence in general practice – Part A – Clinical Governance Framework](https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/clinical-guidelines/key-racgp-guidelines/view-all-racgp-guidelines/prescribing-drugs-of-dependence/prescribing-drugs-of-dependence-part-a).

USQ Health Service one-year review of opioid prescribing protocol

*Current as of: September 2021*

*Version no: 1.0*

*Review date: September 2023*

If opioid therapy is required for longer than 12 months, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)

requires clinical review of the case and support by a second medical practitioner. The standards required for evaluation for the PBS review have not been documented. This policy details a protocol that USQ Health Service feels is appropriate to make an informed evaluation of long-term opioid therapy.

**Patient Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DOB:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Review date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Evaluation criteria | Yes | No |
| 1. Clinical diagnosis | | |
| a) Is there a comprehensive documentation of the patient’s pain condition, general medical condition, psychosocial history, psychiatric status and substance use history? |  |  |
| b) Is the indication/diagnosis for prescribing opioids clearly supported and documented? |  |  |
| c) Is opioid medication clinically appropriate in this condition? |  |  |
| 2. Opioid treatment | | |
| a) Has opioid therapy produced and maintained a measurable improvement in the patient’s functional capacity? |  |  |
| b) Are the total doses of all opioids below ‘ceiling’ dose levels? (ie for [*Insert practice name*] 80 mg morphine equivalent a day) |  |  |
| c) Is the patient substantially free from adverse side effects of opioid therapy? |  |  |
| d) Is there continued absence of inappropriate dose escalation, aberrant behaviour, misuse or abuse of opioids? |  |  |
| e) Has a reduction in opioid therapy been trialled? |  |  |
| f) Have urine drug screens been used to investigate possible diversion, compliance, or other illicit drug use? |  |  |
| 3. Additional treatment | | |
| a) Are non-drug therapies maximised? |  |  |
| b) Given the clinical complexity and risk, is the current level of specialist care and  multidisciplinary intervention adequate and appropriate?  In general the following scenarios are considered as complex and high risk by USQ Health Service, and indicated for specialist and multidisciplinary review:   * those who use two or more psychoactive drugs in combination (polydrug use) (eg opioid, * benzodiazepines, antipsychotic, anti-epileptics, and depressants) * patients with serious mental illness comorbidities, or antipsychotic medication * mixed use of opioids and illicit drugs * mixed use of opioids and benzodiazepines * recent discharge from a correctional services facility * patients discharged from other general practices due to problematic behaviour * signs of potential high-risk behaviours. |  |  |
| 4. Compliance | | |
| a) Is current opioid prescribing compliant with relevant state and territory laws and  regulations for controlled substances? |  |  |

Answering ‘no’ to any of the above options should prompt a consideration to alter the management plan.

**Recommendations**

* Continue therapy
* Reduce opioid dose
* Reduce and cease opioids
* Pursue alternate therapies
* Suggest specialist review

Reviewing Practitioner’s stamp:

Reviewing Practitioner’s Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Disclaimer

The information set out in this publication is current at the date of first publication and is intended for use as a guide of a general nature only and may or may not be relevant to particular patients or circumstances. Nor is this publication exhaustive of the subject matter. It is no substitute for individual inquiry. Compliance with any recommendations does not guarantee discharge of the duty of care owed to patients. The RACGP and its employees and agents have no liability (including for negligence) to any users of the information contained in this publication.

© The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners [2019]

[This](mailto:This) resource is provided under licence by the RACGP. Full terms are available at [www.racgp.org.au/usage/licence](https://www.racgp.org.au/usage/licence)

*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.*