



Chronic Pain Management - Minimising Harm from Opioids

Background

There is little evidence for the use of opioids in chronic non-cancer pain but considerable evidence of harm. The harm increases substantially at doses above the oral morphine equivalent of 120mg/day but there is no increased benefit. The National Patient Safety Improvement Programme highlights that evidence indicates that for every **62 socially deprived people** between 15-64 years old with chronic pain who are prescribed opioids at any dose over 2 years, **1 extra person dies who would not have**, if all 62 had been supported in other ways. As a county one of the medicines optimisation priorities has been supporting the management of chronic pain and minimising harm from opioids.

Resources available

A Chronic Pain Webpage is now live, for use by all professionals managing patients with chronic pain, across the whole system, and patients and carers, living with, or supporting someone with, chronic pain. The webpage can be accessed via the link [Chronic Pain - Northamptonshire](#) or QR code below:



The webpage includes the following areas:

- **About pain**
 - Information tailored mainly to patients to help them understand different types of pain and signposting to other resources to find out more about pain if required.
- **Services and Support Groups**
 - Information tailored mainly to patients to allow them to self-refer and access appropriate support for their own pain.
 - This also links to the Wellbeing Launchpad which now contains a section devoted to chronic pain services and support.
- **Self-Management**
 - Information tailored to patients to help empower them to take control of their lives and resources to support them in managing their chronic pain.
- **Medication for Pain**
 - Key information for patients and healthcare professionals about the use of medicines for chronic pain.
 - More information and additional patient information leaflets can also be found here.
- **Resources for Health Care Professionals**
 - Includes opioid tapering and discontinuation guidance and resources for primary care.
 - HIN toolkits for improving opioid repeat prescribing processes & for opioid prescribing QI in primary care.
 - Activity on referral information, STAR drug and alcohol addiction services and Chronic Back Pain management Programme.

By bringing the resources and expertise together in a single place we can better offer our patients consistent messaging and high-quality support in managing their chronic pain. This work has been supported by pharmacists, doctors, physiotherapists, and personalisation teams across all sectors; the collaboration bringing together all the expertise and resources across the county. A special thanks to GPA hosting the webpage and the considerable work that has gone into building the webpage.

This edition is also available on the Primary Care Portal