

NPS MEDICINEWISE – OPIOIDS PROGRAM

Program Goal

To improve quality use of opioids and reduce associated harms for Australians with chronic non-cancer pain.

What is the focus of this Program?

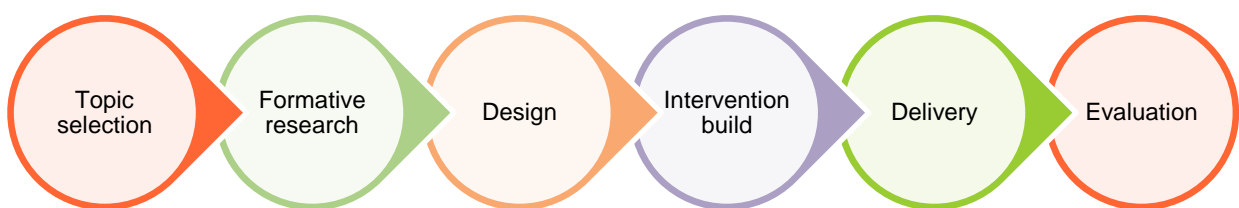
Rather than focusing on condition specific use of opioids, it was highlighted through consultation with experts that there are significant issues and additional support required for GPs and consumers along the continuum of opioid use (initiation, deprescribing and referral). This approach provides an opportunity to develop a program that has the potential to influence and impact the various practice gaps that exist among GPs and acknowledge varying needs and levels of support required.

The key messages of the program are:

- ▷ Using a cautious and considered approach when starting opioids in chronic non-cancer pain because of their limited role and potential for harm
- ▷ Determining when and how to taper opioids to reduce risk of harm
- ▷ Seeking help from appropriate support service

Opioids in acute pain, palliative care and opioid replacement therapy are considered out of scope.

What was the development process for the program?



Topic Selection

A systematic approach is taken to identify potential program topics by drawing on multiple resources, including horizon scanning. Internal and external expert advisors and key stakeholders are engaged to provide context around issues relevant for each topic area. This enables strategic decisions about which programs will have the greatest impact in optimising the quality use of medicines and medical tests.

Formative Research

This is a rigorous process drawing information from systematic assessment of QUM gaps and undertaking research to provide sufficient intelligence on problems and how these can be addressed. The output is a comprehensive Formative Research report which informs the design and development of the program, including:

- ▷ **Background to the condition and medicine:** an evidence section that focus on current national and international guidelines, evidence for efficacy and safety, and data insights (eg, PBS/MBS data, MedicineInsight data, Atlas of Healthcare variations etc)
- ▷ **Environmental scan:** to identify relevant national and international programs and initiatives that focus on the topic
- ▷ **HP knowledge, attitude and behaviour:** an in-depth qualitative research of needs, barriers and QUM gaps associated with HP knowledge, attitude and behaviour. This includes interviews with GPs, key opinion leaders, pharmacists and nurses.
- ▷ **Consumer knowledge, attitude and behaviour:** a literature review of evidence of awareness, understanding of condition and consumer beliefs and needs
- ▷ **Stakeholder engagement summary:** outlines current engagement with key stakeholder organizations and identifies collaboration opportunities

Design

A co-design process with an Expert Working Group to understand the value of focusing on various audience

The Expert Working Group includes consumers, specialists, GPs with special interest, GPs with no specific interest, allied health (pharmacy, practice nurses) and practice managers, where relevant. During this process, the team:

- strategically narrows down the problems into 3 key messages
- identifies program goals and objective
- scopes interventions, mapping each intervention to barriers and drawing program activities, key audience and target KPIs

Invariably, our national programs use a mix of interventions such as educational materials, educational visiting – ie academic detailing, audit and feedback products, undergraduate education, patient mediated strategies, decision support tools, research etc

Build

Development of program activities and resources with continuous input from consumers and health professional through focus groups and pilots

Deliver

Implementing program including educational visits, audit and feedback products and other as appropriate

Upskilling and training the field force to implement educational visiting aspects of the program

Evaluate

An evaluation of the program to measure short-intermediate term impacts and longer-term outcomes of the program on target audiences (i.e. Health professionals and consumers). The methods of evaluation that will be utilised for this program include:

- ▶ Retrospective pre-test GP survey (RPT) with control: a paper-based survey of GPs to assess short to intermediate term program impact:
 - A random sample of GPs from across Australia will be mailed a questionnaire. This will include a participant group who completed an Opioids educational visit and a control group, who did not have a visit
 - The survey will include knowledge and practice questions related to the program objectives and key messages, including patient case scenarios
 - The survey will ask respondents to reflect and respond to questions for two-time periods; NOW (after participating in the activity) and BEFORE (before participating in the activity)
 - The paper-based survey will be sent to approximately 2,500 GPs
- ▶ Clinical e-Audit: the clinical indicators will be analysed to identify any changes in GP practice between the initial and review phases of the audit, which may have led to better patient outcomes.
- ▶ Drug utilisation: PBS data will be analysed to determine any changes in GP prescribing behaviour related to targeted opioid medicines.

Impact evaluation will be conducted 9-12 months after the launch of the program, and outcome evaluation (i.e. drug utilisation) will be conducted up to 2 years after program completion.

Program offerings for health professionals

Educational visits for GPs

- ▷ Provides clarity on the role of opioids when supporting patients with chronic non-cancer pain
- ▷ Covers the latest evidence and offers advice on engaging patients to take an active role in managing pain, along with resources to support patients reduce or stop their opioid medication

Pharmacy visits

- ▷ Focuses on the role of pharmacist in promoting quality use of opioids for chronic non-cancer pain

PBS Practice review

- ▷ A 4-page Practice Reviews designed to provide GPs with an opportunity to reflect on their prescribing of opioids for patients with chronic non-cancer pain. The sample Practice Review is available here <https://www.nps.org.au/pbs-opioids>

Online CPD activities

- ▷ Clinical e-Audit
 - allows GPs to review their prescribing of opioids for patients with chronic non-cancer pain, with a focus on tapering opioids
- ▷ Pharmacy Practice Review
 - focuses on the important role pharmacists play to ensure the safe use of opioids for chronic non-cancer pain and to identify patients who may be at risk of harm from long-term use

Publications

- ▷ **RADAR**
 - *Opioids: New and amended PBS listings*
 - *Use of naloxone for acute opioid overdose*
- ▷ **MedicineWise News** *If not opioids, then what?* – with a focus on non-pharmacological treatment options for chronic non-cancer pain
- ▷ **MedicineWise News** *5 steps to tapering opioids* – a news article with a focus on safe tapering of opioids and provides commentary on tapering algorithm

Resources

- ▷ **Patient action plan Lowering your opioid dose** - GP mediated resource that aims to facilitate a discussion about the possible benefits of tapering, what's involved in the process and help to agree a planned approach.
- ▷ **Conversations starters** - offers useful verbatims for health professionals to start the conversation about tapering with patients
- ▷ **Tapering algorithm** – outlines the framework and principles for tapering opioids

Consumer resources

- ▷ **Choosing Wisely consumer resource *Managing pain and opioid medicines*** – aims to bridge the gap between prescribing in hospital and community use of opioids and encourage patients to ask questions about their medicine.
- ▷ **Opioids information video** - aims to help people make an informed decision in partnership with their doctor about whether to start taking an opioid medicine for chronic (ongoing) non-cancer pain.
- ▷ Easy to read information about opioids and chronic pain
 - [Opioid prescribing changes - improving safety, reducing harm](#)
 - [Opioid medicines and chronic non-cancer pain](#)
 - [Chronic pain explained](#)
 - [Pain: what is going on?](#)
 - [Medicines for pain relief: what are the options?](#)
 - [Nerve pain explained](#)
- ▷ **MedicineWise app** –aim is to provide consumers and carers with information about opioids and increase knowledge of their risk of harms

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES (JUNE 2020 ONWARDS)

Three live webinars

Tailored to specific health professional audiences

Pharmacists (17 Sep 2020)

- ▷ Focused on the role of the pharmacist in Supporting patients living with chronic non-cancer pain
- ▷ On demand recording available [here](#)

GPs (15 Oct 2020)

- ▷ Focused on strategies for GPs to optimise pain management and reduce opioid-related harms
- ▷ On demand recording available [here](#)

Dentists (24 Nov 2020)

- ▷ Focused on the role of opioids and other analgesia in dental pain
- ▷ On demand recording available [here](#)

A series of four educational video

- ▷ [A series of four educational videos](#) aims to support effective conversations between health professionals and patients about the use of opioids for the management of chronic non-cancer pain
- ▷ The videos focus on motivational interviewing techniques, providing examples of interactions between patients and health professionals, and demonstrating how best practice recommendations can be applied to individual patient circumstances.

A series of three podcasts

- ▷ [First podcast](#) focused on opioid tapering process and interviewed A/Prof Michael Vagg, dean of Faculty of Pain Medicine ANZCA, and Don Firth, Consumer from Painaustralia Consumer Advisory Group
- ▷ Two podcasts will be released next year in February and April

Online learning module based on a clinical case study

- ▷ Focused on the safe tapering of opioid treatment
- ▷ Suitable for GPs, pharmacists, nurses and other HPs
- ▷ Release date TBC