

PHARMACY ASPECTS OF BUPRENORPHINE (SUBUTEX) TREATMENT



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AIMS

- 1. Government Recommendations**
- 2. Westminster Substance Misuse Service- current practice**
- 3. Supervised Consumption in Community Pharmacy**
- 4. Substance Misuse Management in Community Pharmacy- KCW**
- 5. Further work**



1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **‘safeguards such as daily dispensing, with supervised consumption, should be inherent to any well-delivered buprenorphine substitution programme’ -**
- **‘ should be supervised for at least 3 months, subject to compliance’**
- **‘if the doctor can be satisfied that compliance will be maintained, take-home doses should be allowed’**

DOH Drug Misuse and Dependence, Guidelines on Clinical Management (1999)



2. WESTMINSTER SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICE

- a) Procedure for supervised consumption**
- b) Review of clients on supervised consumption**
- c) Take-home doses**



a) Procedure for supervising consumption of buprenorphine

- **Ask client to drink water before dispensing to moisten the mouth**
- **Place tablet in a medication measure**
- **Ask client to place tablet under the tongue**
- **Speed of dissolution varies for different clients, approximate times are: 8mg= 8 to 10 min; 2mg= 5 min; 0.4mg= 3 min**
- **When most of the tablet is dissolved, and only a chalky residue remains, then talk to the client**
- **The client should then be asked to leave**



b) Review of clients on supervised consumption

- **On-site/supervised consumption reviewed monthly**
- **Stability of clients considered**
- **Employment commitments**
- **Support network**



c) Take-home doses

- **Instalment dispensing prescribed for weekend doses for first month of on-site dispensing**
- **Prescribed with caution to clients with a history of injecting**
- **Not prescribed to clients with significant psychiatric illness**



3. SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION IN COMMUNITY PHARMACY

- a) advantages of supervising
consumption of buprenorphine**
- b) disadvantages of supervising
consumption of buprenorphine**
- c) administration of buprenorphine**



a) Advantages of supervising consumption of buprenorphine

- **Reduce risk of injecting**
- **Pharmacy support/intervention during titration**
- **Improve/ monitor concordance**
- **Risk management**
- **Vulnerable clients**



b) Disadvantages of supervising consumption of buprenorphine

- **Time consuming**
- **Embarrassing for client**
- **Inflexible for client**
- **Reputation/security of pharmacy affected**
- **Private area required**



c) Administration of Buprenorphine

- **Breaking tablets in half**
- **Crushing tablets-**

Manufacturer comments:

'There are no studies so far, so no evidence base on effectiveness of crushing tablets. Schering-Plough do not recommend crushing Subutex for sublingual use.

Theoretically, it should not make a difference. However, the increase in surface area may speed up absorption. On the other hand, the crushed tablet may increase salivation, which in turn may increase the risk of swallowing (1st pass metabolism will nullify the effect of Subutex). Overall, the effect may be reduced.'



4. SUBSTANCE MISUSE MANAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY PHARMACY SCHEME- KCW

- **Instalment Dispensing**
- **Procedure writing**
- **Training to community pharmacists on the scheme**



5. FURTHER WORK

- **Official guidelines for supervising consumption of Buprenorphine in community pharmacy**
- **Research into administration of Buprenorphine**
- **Incorporation of Buprenorphine into shared care schemes**