

The problem with OTC drugs

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www.codeinefree.me.uk

History of Codeinefree

- Set up by Mark Edwards
- Original site a comparison of what was deemed 'Safe'
- Intolerance to suggestions for change
- Use of several prescribed and OTC opiates
- Common themes

Aims of Codeinefree

- To be proactive in helping people reduce and stop using
- To not promote means of continued abuse e.g. extraction methods.
- To not blame the drug companies
- To give meaningful advice
- Harm reduction

The problem

- Nobody knows the extent of this
- Lack of 'Yellow card' completion
- Advertising
- The internet
- The shopping trips
- The Pharmacy challenges
- Medication reviews

- Do we need to prescribe Codeine separately?
- Are we signposting properly?
- Do we ask if there is anytime people take more than the maximum dose?
- How long should a repeat prescription last?

Codeinefree figures

- Past year 334,899 accesses to the site
- Past month 89,637
- Past week 19,447
- Past day 2950

Origins of members

- Google.co.uk 32.9%
- Search.live.com 10.73%
- Google.com 7.1%
- ITV.Com 5.86%
- SMMGP 2.88%

Messages from members

- the thing i was most cross about was my GPs just gave me codeine cos they couldn't work out what was actually wrong
- There was no warning about the addictiveness and they were quite happy to keep doling the stuff out without question

- the message I would give to any one in the medical profession is to read the stories on this site...these are REAL people with REAL issues that need to be acknowledged . I think that the posts on here speak volumes ...

- i, as an addict, would like to be able to know which doctors have experience and training in dealing with addiction. my doc admits he knows little about the subject, but at least he consults others who do. i respect this level of honesty.
- i would prefer GPs to be more willing to ask other doctors if they don't know something, rather than trying to appear all knowing. I would have a lot more respect if they would just hold their hands up and say "you know what, I'm not sure, I'll find out"

- 1. Don't label individuals.
- 2. Try to understand that people do have issues beyond the physical addiction.
- 3. Everyone is an individual and will not fit into a pigeonhole.
- 4. It is a debilitating condition and needs to be treated seriously.
- 5. Promote support groups/forums such as this one.
- 6. Avoid trivialising the problem and patronising the addict.
- 7. Try to investigate real issue and help support needs of individual.
- 8. If uncertain of how to deal with these issues then refer to someone who can.

- Treat codeine like it's diazepam. Only give it out on prescription if you REALLY have to. Doctors always go on about how they don't give out diazepam for more than 2 weeks. They take this drug seriously. I was hooked on codeine within 2 weeks. And then took it for 8 years, no question on repeat prescription. No doctor questioned or gave a toss

- when GMTV did the painkiller article, Dr Hillary said this didn't happen but we have loads of living proof on here that it does ..

The Gate-keepers to OTC drugs.

- The Royal Pharmaceutical Society state 'Pharmacists have a professional responsibility to ensure they do not supply any products where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting misuse.'
- The RPSGB 'Make the care of patients your first concern'

The way forward

- Please treat these patients seriously
- Please be careful when prescribing Codeine
- Be careful with medication reviews and making these drugs repeat prescriptions
- Do we need to add to the problem by prescribing codeine with Ibuprofen or Paracetamol?

- Structured withdrawal programmes are available on the site, give them a go.
- Think about Buprenorphine or Methadone if things don't work out.
- Please sign-post to the site.

- www.codeinefree.me.uk
- Thank you and questions.