

Pharmacists Supporting the Implementation of the Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain in Primary Care



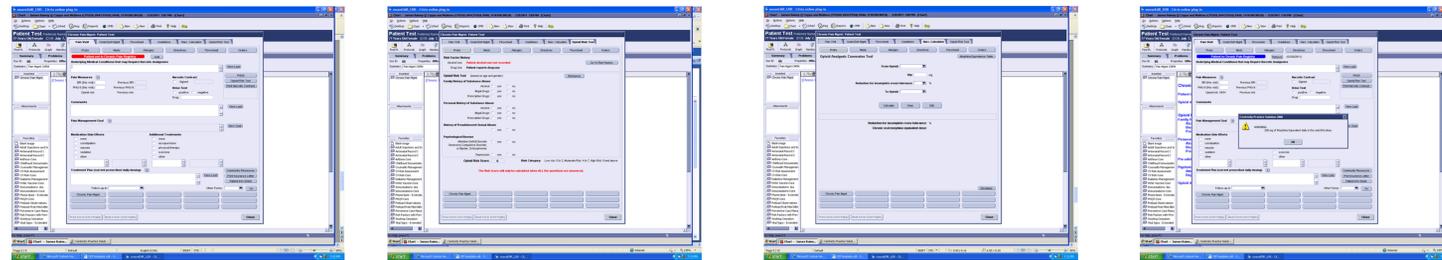
Authors: Antony Gagnon¹, PharmD, Urslin Fevrier-Thomas¹, Katie Hunter², MSc, James Rainey¹, RN, Paul Murphy¹, BScPhm, Margaret Jin¹ PharmD, MSc, Doug Kavanagh³, MD, and the clinical pharmacists of the Hamilton Family Health Team
 1: Hamilton Family Health Team 2: Centre for Effective Practice 3: CognisantMD

In order to ensure the safe and effective use of opioids, the Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain was published in April 2010. However, the integration of the guideline into family physician practices has been challenging due in part to the lack of support within electronic medical records (EMRs). On Feb 29, 2012 the Ontario Drug Benefit program (ODB) removed OxyContin[®] from the ODB Formulary. This generated many questions directed to the pharmacists around conversion between narcotics and ODB coverage. These events were catalysts for a re-evaluation of the management of opioids in primary care.

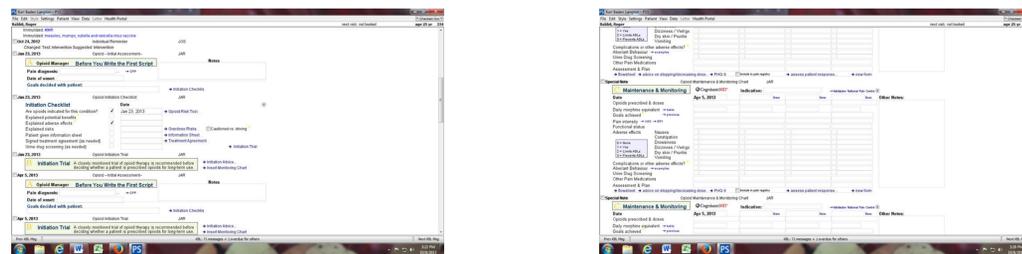
The recognized expertise of the pharmacists in dealing with patients with chronic pain lead to a significant increase in referrals. Their clinical involvement includes all aspects of pharmacotherapy from the selection of the most appropriate medications, to the monitoring of their efficacy and adverse effects, the management of potential drug interactions, as well as the interpretation of urine drug screening test results. Their involvement in patient care facilitated a more consistent adherence with the guideline.

To address these concerns the pharmacists of the Hamilton Family Health Team :

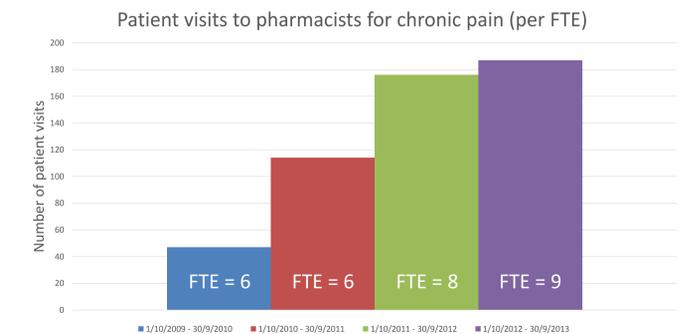
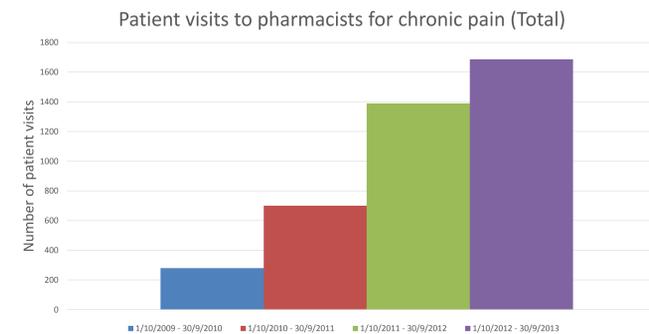
- 1) Published a newsletter highlighting the ODB changes in coverage for OxyContin[®] and a tool on how to convert from one narcotic to another.
- 2) Developed and/or validated chronic pain modules for Practice Solutions and Bell EMR. The pharmacists were also instrumental in their implementation in the physician practices.
 - a) A group of physicians and two of the authors (PM and JR) were involved in a project to implement the Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain into Primary Care. One of the outcome of this project was the development of a Chronic Pain Module for BelleMR.



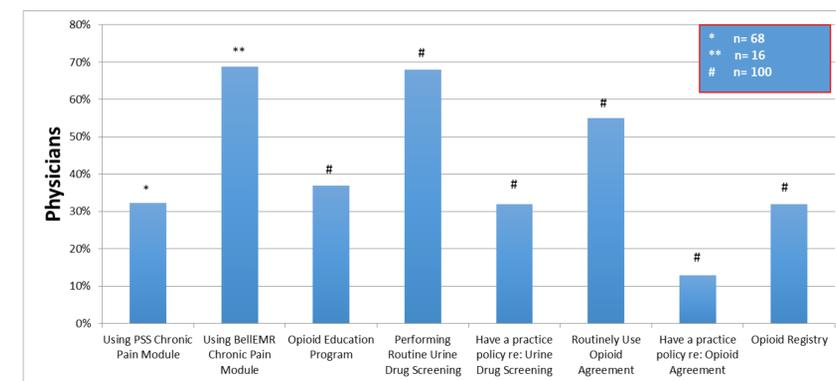
- b) Dr. D. Kavanagh from CognisantMD had developed custom forms (available at cognisantmd.com) to facilitate a more consistent approach to the management of opioids in line with the new guideline. He was invited to the Hamilton FHT and the pharmacists were given the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions to improve the module.



- c) The CEP collected feedback from the early adopters, facilitated the modifications of the CognisantMD Chronic Pain module and developed user manuals. The HFHT IT department produced training videos.
 - d) The pharmacists and one of the authors (JR) provided training on the use of the modules to the early adopters.
- 3) Provide Academic Detailing (AD) sessions to Family Physicians on opioids and urine drug screening (UDS).
- 4) Provide Opioid patient education sessions in collaboration with a mental health counsellor with expertise in addiction and substance abuse.



Prior to 2010, none of the physicians at the Hamilton Family Health team had a systematic way to document the opioid management of their patients in their EMRs. The routine use of urine drug screening, opioid agreements, and opioid registries was a rare occurrence. Pharmacists in collaboration with family physicians have improved significantly in implementing core components of the Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain.



Next Steps

The pharmacists are often the main users of the EMR modules on chronic pain will offer training to physicians. Opioid Education Programs, and the implementation of routine use of urine drug screening and opioid agreement will be extended to more physicians. Better ways to collaborate and communicate with the local pain clinics will be explored.

Reference

1. Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain. Canada: National Opioid Use Guideline Group (NOUGG); 2010. Available from: <http://nationalpaincentre.mcmaster.ca/opioid/>

For more information, please contact:

Antony Gagnon, PharmD
 E-mail: antony.gagnon@hamiltonfht.ca
 Tel (905) 667-4865