

Safer Samples with Pharmacist Care

Enhancing Medication Experience in Patients with Mental Health Conditions

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WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL
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BACKGROUND

Use of medication samples contradicts essential elements of safe and effective medication use and often precludes pharmacist care.

Samples are attractive to psychiatrists because patients with mental illness have:

- Multiple medical co-morbidities and take many medications,
- Increased risk of adverse reactions to all medications which is associated with medication discontinuation,
- Reduced ability to pay for prescriptions.

OBJECTIVE

To develop and evaluate an innovative program for the safer use of samples that involves community pharmacist distribution and comprehensive medication review.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Setting: Women's College Hospital, Toronto, Ontario Canada, Ontario's only academic ambulatory hospital

Process:

1. In place of a sample, patients of the Mental Health Program (approx 22 000 encounters per year) are given a voucher which is redeemable at the hospital's independently operated outpatient pharmacy.
2. Voucher is reviewed by the pharmacist in the same manner as prescriptions that are dispensed.
3. Patients are offered a government funded, one-on-one visit with a pharmacist for a comprehensive medication review.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION CONT'D

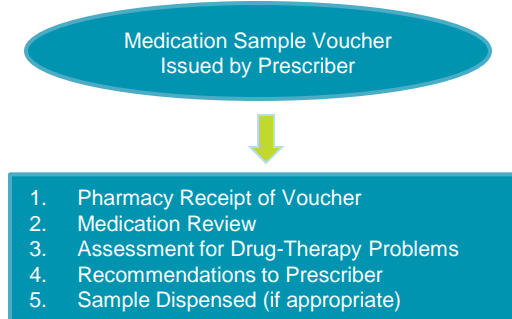


Figure 1 – Safer Samples Program Process

EVALUATION PLAN

A mixed methods evaluation of the program is ongoing and explores:

- Physicians' beliefs about medication samples,
- Characteristics of patients receiving medication samples,
- Numbers and types of drug-therapy problems and recommendations identified by pharmacists,
- Workflow factors including time for inventory management, dispensing and patient medication reviews and follow-up.

Evaluation has been approved by the Women's College Hospital Research Ethics Board.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Pre-Implementation Online Physician Survey

Respondents:

- n=13 psychiatrists (100% completion rate)
- 100% female
- Mix of new and established practitioners (30.8% in practice 1-5 years; 38.5% in practice 11-20 years).

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS CONT'D

Physician Survey Continued

- 46% do not distribute samples to patients
- 67% agree that samples increase patient satisfaction and adherence to treatment
- 58% stated that samples do not influence their prescribing habits

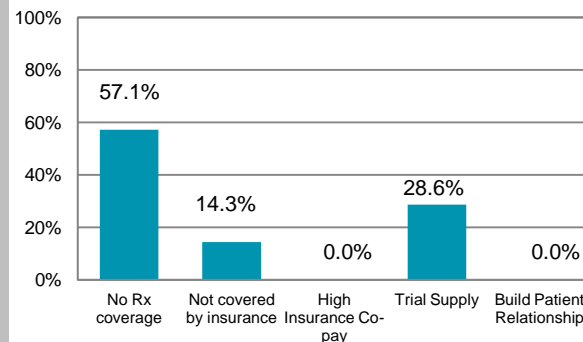


Figure 2 – MD Reported Reasons for Giving Samples

CONCLUSION

The use of samples amongst psychiatrists is lower than originally anticipated.

Findings from the baseline physician survey are consistent with other literature about physician attitudes toward sampling.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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