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Clozapine Prescribing in the Primary Care Environment

Lessons Learned from the
Clozapine Shared Care Program

The Eastern Suburbs Mental Health Service GP Shared Care Project

A Collaboration

Central & Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network (CESPHN)

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD)

This service is funded by



Clozapine Background

... risks, challenges, opportunities

- for many people, it is the most effective treatment for their mental illness
- prescription requires high levels of monitoring for patient safety, side effects management and potential secondary health impacts
- there are few options for managing Clozapine in a primary care setting

Background on Clozapine

... risks, challenges, opportunities

- for many people this means that they must remain in tertiary services regardless of their mental health support needs
- from a recovery perspective this is limiting in relation to their personal recovery goals
- many consumers on clozapine have other physical health needs and may be at greater risk to health deterioration than general population

About Clozapine

Indications

- Treatment resistant schizophrenia – lack of response to at least 2 other antipsychotics, or
- Poor tolerance to other antipsychotics (extrapyramidal side effects, tardive dyskinesia etc).

Contraindications

History of drug induced granulocytopenia/agranulocytosis/ bone marrow disorders, circulatory collapse, drug intoxication, comatose conditions, CNS depression, hypersensitivity to Clozapine or any of its components, alcoholic and toxic psychoses, severe renal , cardiac, hepatic disease, uncontrolled epilepsy, paralytic ileus...

Clozapine Clinic

Eastern Suburbs Mental Health Service

- 231 consumers in our service receive Clozapine Therapy
- 99 of these individuals are case managed in the community
- On average in the Clozapine Clinic, we review 15 consumers and write at least 50 scripts per week
- 13 Consumers participate in GP Shared Care (GPSC) where the GP manages the prescriptions and routine bloods
- Some of the consumers have been service users of the clozapine clinic for many years

Roles & Responsibilities Clozapine Clinic

- Facilitate registration of new consumers with Clopine Central
- Provide information to the consumer and families
- Ensure that the required 4-weekly blood tests are carried out for each consumer and all appropriate action is taken. (WBC count/neutrophils are all stable)
- Liaise with GP and other health care providers such as pharmacists and care coordinators
- Organise fasting metabolic blood testing and record results
- Monitor physical and mental health and support accordingly

GP Shared Care – Strengths and Successes

- Enabling consumers to have independence and self-determination and breaking away from stigma.
- Helpful to go to one place for mental and physical health needs.
- GP regularly checks blood results and ensures physical health concerns are identified, with a care plan to be negotiated and followed up.
- Working collaboratively to optimise mental and physical healthcare in a holistically and recovery-oriented approach.

GP Shared Care – Strengths and Successes

- Discussions around care plan may include things like:
 - ✓ a referral to a dietician, exercise physiologist or psychologist under a GP management plan for chronic diseases.
 - ✓ referral to a cardiologist.
 - ✓ smoking reduction/ cessation.
 - ✓ weight loss goals.
- Collaborating with support workers to assist with and enhance psychosocial goals such as walking, social and daily activities, appointments etc.

A few challenges

transitioning to GP Shared Care Program

- Resistance or reluctance to change – Consumers and GPs
- Changing an established routine can be challenging for people with serious and persistent mental health challenges
- Barriers to clozapine prescribing in GP Practices

Positive Consumer Feedback

- Happy having regular follow up from GP
- Feeling empowered, being able to visit GP of choice
- Alleviates anxiety as consumers have the power to plan their own care
- Less reliance on a formal mental health service
- GPs provide referrals to allied health and various other health professionals when required

Positive Consumer Feedback

- Partnerships with pharmacies & pathologies are strengthened
- Relief from not having to repeat their 'story' every time they see a new health professional
- Continuity of care is invaluable
- Enjoy making their own appointment times and schedule
- Support workers very helpful!

Thank you!

Any questions?

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