

Helping Patients with Alcohol Problems

Project Title

Helping Patients with Alcohol Problems

Project Director

Rolande Anderson

Summary of Project

The project is mainly an educational resource for general practitioners. It involves the education and dissemination of best practice in the field of alcohol interventions for patients who attend primary care practitioners.

Background to the Project

The project commenced in March 2000. It was initiated following an approach from Merck Pharmaceutical and developed by the Director of the PRC and the CEO of ICGP. The problems of alcohol abuse and dependence had been very much neglected in medical training and practice. The project was designed to address these deficits for GPs and GP trainees. The first phase of the project ran from March 2000 to September 2003 and was supported by Merck, apart from a three-month period that was supported by the ICGP. The current phase is due to run from September 1st 2003 to August 31st 2006 and is funded by the Department of Health and Children.

Educational Aims of Project

- To educate GPs in brief interventions for the range of alcohol problems.
- To encourage GPs to educate patients and their families about the range of alcohol problems.
- To provide the necessary skills training to primary care staff.
- To develop guidelines and practical help for GPs to help patients.
- To encourage and support training programmes to develop alcohol modules.
- To generate public awareness and lobby for appropriate changes in legislation and attitudes towards alcohol use and abuse.

Benefit(s) to Members of Project

Members have an additional resource at their disposal to enable them to tackle this important health and social issue.

Project Activities/Tasks

The table below sets out the main activities since April 2004:

Date	Type of session (W) = Workshop (L) =Lecture	Attendance All Approx.	Target Group	Comments
7/04/04	Meeting with Brian Lenihan, TD			Discussion re possible educational film on alcohol
21/04/04	Meeting of Irish based team for Phepa (EU) Project	10		Part of development of Irish response for Phepa Project
22/04/04	Training session for Practice Nurses and delivered lecture (W)	30	Practice Nurses all from Eastern Region (Mostly GPs)	First attempt to offer nurses training in this area – proved very successful
23-24/04/04	(W) Midland Health Board Trainers	10	GPs	Brief interventions for family members
15/05/03 and at regular intervals throughout the project to date	(W)	30 on average	GPs	Those GPs seeking level 1 and level 2 training for methadone. Do session on motivational interviewing
28/5/2004	Ran Session for Student Health Professionals	50	Mixed group of GPs, Psychiatrists, Nurses and Counsellors	Very worthwhile day on brief interventions in student population
29/5/04	CME review	4		To co-ordinate a new effort for GP Trainers at CME level conducted by CME Tutors
9/6/04	Set-up of new Alcohol Reference Group	10		Group set up to provide relevance to the programme and advice/feedback on various products from the overall project. To meet 2/3 times per year or as necessary. Includes GPs, and training specialist.
15/6/2004	'Bridging the Gap' conference, Poland – European conference	250	Mixed group of professionals	Excellent conference and very worthwhile.
29/06/04	Meeting in Birmingham with Family specialists	5		To liaise with GP family and alcohol researchers – very useful
21/7/04	PRC Brainstorm			
23/07/04	'Growing Older with Alcohol' project begins			In collaboration with the National Council on Ageing and Older People. To develop materials for use in general practice – module, one page document for GPs and information sheets for patients
16/09/04	(L) On ICGP response to alcohol at Addiction Studies Conference TCD training	200	Mixed audience of health professionals	Talk went well, conference very disappointing
17-18 Sept. 2004	(L) On Alcohol for Carlow/Kilkenny Faculty	50	GPs	Very good feedback, well organised study days
22/9/04	First meeting of new Alcohol Reference Group	10		
27/09/04	Attended Launch of 'No Name Club' new initiative	150	Mixed audience	
29/09/04	Phepa Irish Team Meeting			Irish based team discussions

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8/10/04	WONCA Conference	15	GPs	Very disappointing attendance
28+29/10/04	Training session Sligo (W)	30	GP trainees	Methods of intervention with patients
20/10/04	Phepa Conference			Last meeting of Phase one
2/11/04	(L) ANEW Conference Main speaker	40	Public Talk	Self help group for women with alcohol problems
11/11/04	(L) for social committee Church of Ireland on Alcohol and the Family	25		One-off
16/11/04	Completed Irish team Phepa report			A great deal of work and ignored to date by Minister for Health and Children, though receipt of copy acknowledged
26/11/04	(L+W) National Mental Health Symposium held at TCD	40	Mixed professional group	Changing lifestyles (Alcohol) for student population mostly
14+15/12/04	Focus Groups with older patients (x2)	20		For development of 'Growing Older with Alcohol' leaflets
Mid January	Delivered Module for Mimi Copty's work on Mental Health			Took a great deal of time – but done in the spirit of project director co-operation!
15/01/05	Women's Health Course	30	GPs and health nurses	In conjunction with Nick Fenlon
25/01/05	Attended launch of Church of Ireland document on alcohol and the family			
29/01/05	(L) Family Planning Doctors	30	GPs	One-off contribution
2/2/05	Interviews fore new Alcohol Aware Service Initiative			Development of service initiative funded by HSE Eastern region involving up to 26 GPs and 8 counsellors
5/02/05	(W) Clonmel Study day	80	GPs	On Brief Interventions for patients with alcohol problems
7/02/05	(L) Undergraduate Medical Students TCD	80	Student Doctors	Alcohol in general
8/02/05	(L) Scales Course	25	GPs	One-off contribution
11/02/05	(L) to RCSI Medical students	35	Student Doctors	On-off on alcohol with a patient
16/02/05	Attended 'Health of Doctors' Conference			
25/02/05	Meeting with Mr. Paddy Creedon			Re development of AAP in South West
8/03/05	Attended launch of Action On Alcohol Initiative			NGO. This will continue to take up some time as it is a useful forum to lobby the 'powers that be'. There are approx 4 meetings per year

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9/03/05	Meeting with Margaret O'Riordan to try to develop training initiative			An 'oven-ready' module for use by trainees in the specialist training schemes is now going to be developed.
23+ 30March +6 April 05	Training for AAP Initiative	26 Doctors and 8 Counsellors		Has been a major undertaking. Now that it is up and running a template is available for future initiatives in other areas

In Addition to Above

Numerous articles for medical magazines and journals, national and local newspapers, interviews with other journalists, preparation for upcoming events, meetings with Director of PRC and with CEO, local and national radio interviews and all the usual office commitments such as email, returning calls, responding to letters and giving advice etc.

The commitment to ICGP for the project is 2.5 days per week.

Project Timetable

The following are scheduled at the time of writing:

- Second Phase of Phepa (EU) Study.
- Launch of Growing Older with Alcohol Documents 01/06/05.
- Interim reports on AAP and Regular contact/support and visitation as necessary as well as an ongoing analysis of results. Also support and supervision on Counsellors as necessary.
- Delivery of lecture to i-Quest Conference, Sunday Business Post, 25/05/05 on Binge Drinking.
- Training for FPRP residents in late June, early July, Bahrain.
- Training session in Donegal, Date to be fixed.

Detailed Project Description

See above table.

Project Milestones/Deliverables/Outputs

Item	Date
Main Project	1 March, 2004 – 30 September, 2006
Educational Programmes	
CME Tutors Group - delivered by CME Tutor	June 2004
CME Tutors Group	Regular intervals every year
Training Workshops	As requested every year
CME small groups	As requested every year
Clinical Skills Courses – to include training for practice nurses	x3 per year on regional basis
Information leaflet for GPs/practice nurses	November 2005
Clinical Guidelines leaflet for GPs	November 2005
Modules:	
- Alcohol and Women	Ready – just finishing touches

- Alcohol and the Workplace - Alcohol and Older People - Alcohol and Crisis Intervention (new module) - Alcohol and Co-Morbidity - Alcohol and Physical Complications - Alcohol and the Homeless - Alcohol and Legal Issues - Alcohol and Other Drugs	Part ready- August 05 June 2005 January 2006 March 2006 July 2006 October 2006 February 2007 July 2007
Information leaflet for patients - elderly	June 2005
Lectures to other groups: (e.g.) Practice Nurses, Rural Doctors, Trainers etc	As requested every year
Video resource for GPs in practice (focus on the consultation)	June 2006
Involvement in Training Programmes	Every year as requested and see above 'Key targets'
International Conference	February 2006
Public and Medical Awareness	
Regular articles in Forum and other medical publications	Every year throughout the project
Articles for the general media	Every year throughout the project
Participation at international conferences	Every year throughout the project
Participation in ICGP AGM	Every year throughout the project
Liaison with other Colleges and Fellows (e.g.) Women's Health, Asylum Seekers, Suicide etc.	Every year throughout the project
Computerised diagnostic and screening prompts for GPs	Development throughout the project
Broadcasts	As requested every year
Alcohol Aware Practice Study (Phase 2)	April 2005 – March 2006
Preparation of materials	March 2005
Recruitment of counsellors and practices	Feb 2005
Training	March 2005
Practice visits	Throughout the project as necessary
Results	Interim October 2005
Quality Mark	November 2006 – June 2007
Module Booklet	August 2006

Statement of Achievements/Outcomes to Date

The project has been very successful in raising awareness among the medical profession as well as with the general public. The commencement of the new Alcohol Aware Practice Pilot Service Initiative is the highlight of the year. The project is in the forefront of media consultation on alcohol related issues and is also involved in an EU study. We have demonstrated that alcohol problems can be tackled effectively within primary care.

Current Activities

See above timetables.

Future Plans

KEY TARGETS – For Discussion

Replicate Alcohol Aware Practice Pilot Study

We hope to develop a larger study involving every region. This will depend on our ability to secure funding. Another possibility is to develop initiatives with individual Health Boards. It is envisaged that practices will be awarded quality marks for their ability to deal with alcohol problems in the next phase of the

project. Practice staff will need to satisfy the ICGP that they have reached a standard for delivery of patient services for alcohol issues.

Develop Success of Counsellor Initiative Nationwide

We want to build on the success of the counsellor initiative in Baltinglass and try to develop it as a partnership approach in the whole country. A further report will be issued on this specific initiative in October 2005. We await the results of the new Alcohol Aware Practice Initiative, where 8 counsellors are working six hours per week with 26 GPs and primary care staff.

Publish Guidelines for Primary Care

The EU study (Phepa) products, (Guidelines, a web-site and training manual), were delayed and will not now be available till June 2005. The Irish based team report was completed on time. The second phase of Phepa will run from 2005-2007 and will focus on training implementation. We hope to publish our own national guidelines in November 2005 or so and work will start as soon as we have the EU (Phepa) guidelines.

Publish Leaflet for Handy Use by Practitioners

In addition to the Guidelines 'Bible' we have to publish an easy reference card for GPs and practice nurses which will amount to two pages with back to back lamination. This should be published at the same time as the Guidelines document.

Continue to Develop Awareness

In the course of the project the ICGP has become a respected commentator on national issues in all parts of the media. In addition, other interest groups have invited us to present workshops/seminars and lectures on the subject. This part of the work should continue but the main focus should always be on developing practitioner awareness and skills.

The Topic, 'Alcohol Problems' to be Institutionalised as part of all Trainee Courses

To date we have been asked to participate on a 'one off basis' on most of the training courses. However it would appear that alcohol remains as a topic that is not necessarily an established part of all GP training courses. One suspects that their confidence to deliver such courses is low. Talks have begun with the Director of GP Training to develop an 'oven-ready' course for trainees. The Alcohol Project Director is working on this document which will be ready in September 2005.

Develop Knowledge Base and Modules

Also we should keep up attendance at national and international conferences and debates.

Encourage more Participation from Working GPs

One of the continued weaknesses of the project to date is the reliance on the

Project Director. There has been GP involvement at task group and reference group level and on the Irish EU team. In addition some GPs have been very available and supportive to the Project Director. However there is probably a need to get someone involved at a more formal level. An assistant is probably not necessary but a dedicated alcohol tutor might be an idea. Such a GP could influence and participate at training course and CME conferences.

Administrative Resource

Yvette Dalton, Administrator of the Alcohol Project. She continues to do a superb job. Project would not be successful without her most pleasant and efficient help and support.

Funding Sources

DoHC, HSE.

Commentary

This report has been put together in a similar way to last year and there is a great deal of overlap. Even a cursory look at last year's targets will reveal that many of them are still not completed though all have been progressed. The main reason for this is that the Project tends to develop a life of its own and take off in unpredictable ways. For example the last four months have been dominated by the new Alcohol Aware Service initiative and the 'Growing Older with Alcohol' project.

The alcohol project continues to be extremely busy and could easily be a full time project.

A major concern is whether or not the project will continue to be funded beyond September 2006. The situation in the past where we were hanging on to find out if the funding was secure is very regrettable and de-motivating. Furthermore there will need to be strategic planning in conjunction with the CEO and Director of the PRC to prioritise targets.

I want to thank everyone involved in ICGP for their ongoing help and support. In particular, Gillian Doran, Librarian, who helped out greatly in the electronic recording system for the AAP initiative.

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