

Dispensing Review of the Use of Medicines (DRUMs)

Introduction

The Dispensing Doctor Quality Scheme (DSQS) introduced in April 2006 was intended to closer align the services that patients can expect to receive from Dispensing Doctors to those that patients in other areas receive from Community Pharmacist

Community Pharmacists currently undertake Medicines Use Reviews (MURs) during which the pharmacist will hold a face to face review with the patient, reviewing the compliance and concordance and looking for potential side effects, problems with the use of the medicines, and answering any questions the patient may have about their medicines.

DRUMs are an opportunity for dispensers in Dispensing Doctor practices to review the patient's in a similar way. They are an opportunity to check the patients' understanding of their medicines, and their ability to obtain and use them. They are intended to compliment not replace the clinical medication review carried out by the healthcare professional.

DRUMS should be carried out by trained dispensary staff or health professionals with appropriate knowledge of medicines (side effects, dose regimes etc). During the previous two years, whilst aspects of the scheme were phased in, the PCT have allowed dispensing practices to hand out DRUM questionnaires as an alternative to carrying out face to face reviews, providing that a full DRUM was undertaken for those patients who indicated via the questionnaire that there were problems. This year the requirement to qualify for payment in the DRUMs section is to carry out a face to face DRUM on 10% of dispensing patients who are receiving medicines.

Aims and Outcomes

DRUMs are a practical look at how the patient manages their medicines. They are face to face reviews, looking at patients' compliance and concordance, and an opportunity to ensure that the patient is using their medicines safely and correctly. The patient will have the opportunity to ask questions, sometimes things they wouldn't ask the doctor because of time pressures or a fear of feeling silly. If there is anything the dispenser can't answer, or if they identify that the patient needs a full clinical review, they can make an appointment for the patient to discuss their treatment with their doctor.

Compliance is the extent to which the patient takes their prescribed medicines as intended. Patients can be "non-compliant" for a number of reasons including misunderstanding, confusion, mistaken beliefs, forgetful.

Concordance is agreeing with the patient how they will change their behaviour or actions to get the best benefit from their medicines e.g. use a reminder chart to avoid forgetting, take it now they understand why, take it every night instead of erratically.

DRUMs should be carried out by trained dispensary staff or registered healthcare professionals, on 10% of dispensing patients taking medicines in each year. They should be recorded in the patient's record.

Purpose

As already indicated the purpose of a DRUM review is to ensure safe and effective use of medicines.

By having a face to face review with the patient (or carer where appropriate) problems can be identified:

The DRUM should establish

- the patient's actual use and understanding of their medicines
- where there is poor compliance, and if possible provide solutions to improve this
- if there are medicines the patient does not want, or has stopped taking (if appropriate these can be removed from the record after discussion with the prescriber)
- identify any problems such as adverse effects, uncontrolled symptoms
- where there are problems with obtaining medicines e.g. items out of synch requiring multiple visits to the dispensary, patient unable to open bottles, etc.

Using information from the patient or carer it can be possible to improve clinical outcomes, by encouraging the correct administration of medicines. Waste can be reduced by stopping dispensed medicines being hoarded unused, whilst bringing medicines into line can reduce the frequency of visits to the practice, making it easier for the patient to obtain their medicines and reducing the dispensary workload.

Things to consider

To carry out these reviews it is important to have a sufficient level of privacy, in order to maintain confidentiality. The dispensary staff will need to be trained, all staff will need to know how the system operates in your practice and how to feed into it. Staff carrying out the reviews will need the relevant knowledge to answer questions and give advice about administration issues etc. They will also need to be able to assess patients for compliance and the need for support.

Targets

For 08/09 to achieve the DSQS requirement, 10% of dispensing patients who are using medicines will need to have a full face to face DRUM review.

Patient Selection

The PCT has issued guidance that the target groups for DRUMS should ideally be

- Patients taking four or more medicines
- Patients who have recently been discharged from hospital, especially those with complex new medicines regimes or changes to existing regimes
- Patients aged over 65

Using this guidance, patients should be identified from the dispensing list, and invited for a review (see patient letter template for practice adaptation). Once the invitation for a review has been sent, patients should be reviewed in a timely manner, therefore it is suggested to send out invitations in small batches of a manageable size.