

Improving patient care and reducing costs with a polypharmacy review



Midlands and Lancashire
Commissioning Support Unit

midlandsandlancashirecsu.nhs.uk

Background

Birmingham South Central Clinical Commissioning Group commissioned our pharmacist-led Polypharmacy Review Service to carry out a three-year polypharmacy review starting October 2016. This continued after the CCG merged with Birmingham CrossCity and Solihull CCGs to form Birmingham and Solihull CCG in April 2018.

Action

Level 3 medication reviews for adult patients are delivered by a team of pharmacists with support from technicians and an administrator. EMIS searches in practices are risk-stratified to prioritise patients for review. An adapted version of the RIO tool is used to identify patients at risk of hospital admission.

Face-to-face reviews are carried out in the clinic or in the patient's own home. Pharmacists then meet GPs to explain their recommendations and follow up patients as necessary. The reviews:

- ensure each patient is prescribed safe and appropriate medicines
- assess any adverse drug reactions and drug interactions
- assess patient compliance and address any issues
- de-prescribe unnecessary or harmful medicines
- provide information and address patient concerns
- monitor drug therapy
- resolve interface issues, for example with secondary care
- produce a patient-specific pharmaceutical care plan.

Impact

The Polypharmacy Review Service is reducing avoidable harm and potential risk of premature death, enhancing quality of life for people with long-term conditions, helping people recover from illness or injury, and improving patients' experience of care.

By November 2018 (with just under 12 months to go), a total of **4,225 drugs had been stopped, 2610 quantity reduced and 150 switched, and 307 potential hospital admissions had been avoided.** From the 5,343 patients reviewed, the total estimated cost improvement resulting from de-prescribing, switching drugs and reducing quantities and from potentially reduced hospital admissions is just over **£1million.**

The review team are continuously undertaking evaluation surveys with GPs and patients. Of the 1026 patient survey returns received so far, **99% of respondents found their reviews very helpful or helpful.** Of the 61 GP practice returns, 98% of respondents found the reviews and the scheme very helpful or helpful.

Project summary October 2016 – November 2018	Reviews	5,343
	Interventions	20,784
	High-risk drug interventions	2,677
	Drugs stopped	4,225
	Potential hospital admissions avoided	307
	Cost savings associated with potential hospital admission avoidance	£493,963
	Annual total drug cost savings	£535,410
	Annual drug cost savings per patient	£100

“I can't emphasise enough how valuable the polypharmacy service was, I wish it was available annually. It is extremely useful.”

Dr Iram Khattak | The Khattak Memorial Surgery, Birmingham

“Hopefully this service will continue as it has been very useful for us & the patients.”

GP responding to survey

“Good service. Should be recommended to all patients.”

Patient responding to survey