



A Pharmacist Intervention to Improve Refills in Smoking Cessation

Overview:

Over the past year, smoking has become an increasingly growing target for intervention for a number of reasons. There has been a drive to decrease public smoking resulting in the development of “smoke free zones.” In South Carolina, there are increasingly new laws calling for smoke free public places (i.e. restaurants), and many hospital campuses are also becoming smoke free.

Adherence to smoking cessation treatment directly impacts the success of a patient’s attempt to quit. Without compliance, treatments are ineffective. A new therapeutic option, varenicline, consists of a total of three months of medication treatment; however, it has been shown that full medication adherence is not being reached. Many patients complete one course of medication and fail to refill the remainder of their treatment. This increases the likelihood for therapeutic failure, decreases return on investment to the payer, and increases overall costs to the healthcare system.

Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to develop a targeted, centralized intervention to evaluate the influence of refill reminders provided personally by a pharmacist or student pharmacist on medication refill rates. It is hypothesized that the outcome will show a higher refill compliance rate after a reminder intervention compared to refill rates of the control group having no documented intervention.

Project Description:

The twelve week project will evaluate the effectiveness of live, telephonic contact with patients receiving a new varenicline prescription. It is estimated that three to five new varenicline prescriptions are presented and filled weekly per South Carolina pharmacy. The goal of this study is to evaluate the refill rates for a total minimum of 600 patients. Participating pharmacies will either use their own pharmacist or allow a pharmacist or student pharmacist contracted with the South Carolina Pharmacy Association (SCPhA) to contact the patient on behalf of the participating pharmacy. Patients eligible for enrollment will be those presenting a new prescription for varenicline during the first four weeks of the project period and those patients that provide written consent to participate in the project.

Two contacts will be made personally by a pharmacist or pharmacy student for the patient’s first and second refill. The telephonic protocols will simply remind the patient that their prescription is due for a refill and to pick it up at their earliest convenience. Pharmacies contacting patients directly will be paid for these brief interventions.

The outcomes measurement will be the percentage of 1st and 2nd refills compared to the historical control.

Resources Required:

1. Access to **Electronic Prescription data** for identifying patients, collecting refill data, and for the historical control.
2. **Pharmacist** or pharmacy student to provide refill reminder intervention and document results. A secondary option is to contract with SCPhA for pharmacist to make interventions on behalf of the individual pharmacies.
3. **Telephone access** for contacting patients.
4. **Fax access** will be required to submit weekly data to SCPhA.

Interested? Contact Jennifer Baker, Pharm.D at jl baker@scrx.org