

DEPRESCRIBING OF MORPHINE SULFATE ORAL SOLUTION IN COUNTY DURHAM

COUNTY DURHAM MEDICINES OPTIMISATION TEAM

Context

- Concerns have been raised nationally regarding the risks associated with morphine sulfate 10mg/5mL oral solution including unintentional or intentional overdose and death¹.
- There is also limited evidence for the use of opioids or for "breakthrough" pain relief in chronic pain².
- In 2021 County Durham was one of the highest prescribers of opioid medications in the country and had recently had a death of a patient associated with overdose of morphine sulfate oral solution.
- It was also recognised that many patients were prescribed this medication for chronic pain outside the national guidance.



Intervention

- The County Durham Medicines Optimisation (MO) Team developed a workstream for GP practices to complete
- The workstream included a review document to ensure the review of patients with chronic pain prescribed morphine sulfate 10mg/5ml oral solution, with a view to stopping, reducing or switching to an alternative where possible.
- The MO team also provided additional support including clinician education, example deprescribing regimes and resources including the RDTC document³.

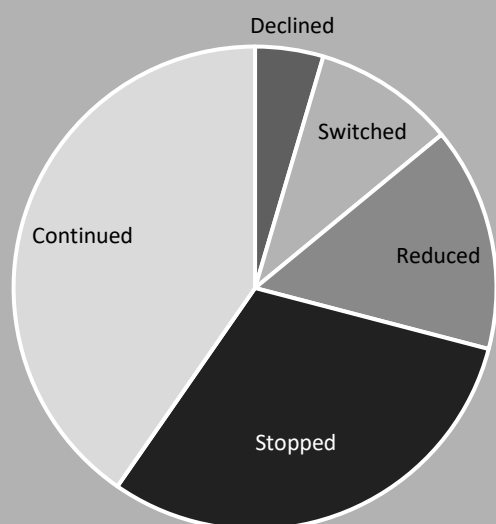


Figure 1 – Outcomes of morphine sulfate 10mg/5ml oral solution reviews

Effect of the intervention

- 1423 patients were reviewed across County Durham from Sept 2021.
- 793 had the medication stopped, reduced or switched to an alternative (55.7%) (See Figure 1)
- 468 (32.8%) required alterations to their prescription to ensure dose and maximum frequency were specified.
- 112 (7.8%) showed evidence of oversupply.
- The volume of morphine sulfate 10mg/5ml oral solution prescribed in Q1 2022-23 compared to Q1 2021-22 as Average Daily Quantities (ADQ) in County Durham has reduced by 15.9%. (See Figure 2)
- The number of patients it was prescribed to has also reduced between the two periods by 11.8%. (See Figure 3)

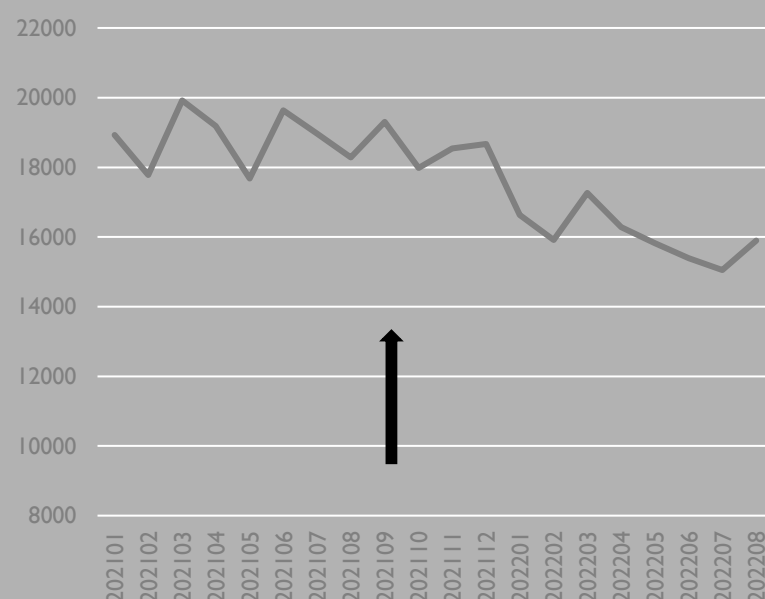


Figure 2 – Volume of morphine sulfate 10mg/5ml oral solution prescribed (ADQ)



Figure 3 – Number of patients prescribed morphine sulfate 10mg/5ml oral solution

Conclusions

- The MO workstream for GP practices in County Durham has been effective in reducing prescribing and improving the safety of morphine sulfate 10mg/5ml oral solution use in County Durham.
- It is planned that further workstreams will be carried out with other liquid oral opioids products and opioid medications.

References

- <https://www.judiciary.uk/prevention-of-future-death-reports/christine-stevenson/>
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG193>
- <https://rdtc.nhs.uk/prescribing-support-document/optimising-the-use-of-morphine-10mg-5ml-oral-solution-in-primary-care-update/>