Prescribing in Primary Care in the Prison Service
Complexities and Considerations

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Aims

• Explain the clinical and physical environment of prescribing in HMP Ford
• Discuss The complexities of medication management in the prison setting
• Explore the additional considerations of prescribing and meeting patient expectations
• Discuss tradeable and popular medications
HMP Ford
Primary Care Services at HMP Ford

• HMP Ford is a Category D resettlement Prison, accommodating 540 male offenders over the age of 21.
• HMP Ford is designed to support offenders to reintegrate into society, take responsibility for their own life and well being
• Many of the offenders have been in prison for a very long time.
• The healthcare service operates as a primary care GP service provided by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
• No on-site pharmacy, all medication is acquired from community pharmacy and the acute trust (higher category prisons have their own pharmacy)
• We help offenders to manage minor illnesses, minor injuries and long term conditions.
• We have a dedicated drug and alcohol recovery team providing opiate substitute and psycho social support
Offenders Responsibilities for their Medications

• All medications are held in possession – with the exception of opiate substitute meds
• Medication can be held in weekly or monthly quantities
• On arrival at the prison offenders sign a contract to say that they will comply with the standards of medication ordering, supply and storage
• Each individual is responsible for requesting repeat prescriptions in a timely appropriate manner and collecting them from the dispensary
• Each individual is responsible for the safe keeping and storage of their medication
Considerations and Complexities

- Aging population – polypharmacy, co-morbidities, declining cognitive functions
- Poor literacy and cognitive function – average reading age =10
- Language barriers
- Drug Seeking behaviours – presenting with very convincing symptoms
- Interactions with illicit substances particularly when prescribing opiate substitutes
- Patient expectations i.e. – cosmetic products – tradeable medications – antibiotics.
- Facilities for secure storage within the accommodation
- Bullying and trading.
- Balancing clinical need with security
Barriers to Prescribing

• Medications we cannot prescribe within an Category D Prison –
• Benzodiazapines, controlled medications- these cannot be held in possession. Within category A, B and C establishments these can be administered under supervision
• Medication we prescribe with caution – pregabalin and gabapentin
• Pregabalin is the principle drug of choice for trading.
• Some preparations i.e aerosols or topical medications with caustic properties
Pain Management

• Acute Pain
• Chronic Pain
• Neuropathic Pain
• Prison Pain Formulary
  • Making the case for an exception to the formulary
Managing complexities

- Agreed formularies – Specialist Pharmacy Group to support and develop best practice across criminal justice services.
- Local formularies
- Robust medicines management governance
- Managing patient expectations through educations and consistent prescribing
- Supporting staff who are being challenged
- Working with the prison service to minimise trading and manage bullying.
- Much easier to monitor and manage effect of medication
- All prison healthcare providers use the same electronic patient record system, allowing full record of all prescribing and interventions.
Summary

• Prescribing is challenging!
• Prescribing in prison is influenced and sometimes limited by the environment but needs will be met.
• Patient expectations put can pressure on clinicians to prescribe inappropriately
• Patient expectations need to be managed through good education and support for clinicians
Useful Links

- [http://antibioticguardian.com/](http://antibioticguardian.com/)  
  Useful resources for staff and patients
- [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/european-antibiotic-awareness-day-resources](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/european-antibiotic-awareness-day-resources)  
  Prison Pain Management Formulary
  RCNGuidance on Nursing in The Criminal Justice Setting
  RCGP Guidance on prescribing in prisons