

Can BVH Emergency Department help reduce drug related deaths in Blackpool?

Background

Blackpool has one of the highest rates of drug related deaths in the UK. Project ADDER (Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery) was launched recently in Blackpool. This is a multi-agency team involving the local police, council and health services aimed at addressing the root causes of drugs misuse, break down supply chains.

A successful trial of take-home naloxone supplied by the Emergency Department (ED) was undertaken in Brighton and Hove, between 2012 – 2013 showing a clear correlation between the reductions in drug related deaths and increased dispensing of take-home naloxone. Moreover, the educational resources provided alongside the packs led to an increase in service users engaging with local drug teams.

Does BVH have a population who could benefit?

Within the ED in Blackpool, we wanted to know: How much naloxone was being dispensed, which patients were requiring it, and what were their subsequent outcomes.

We compared logs of naloxone dispensed from the automated medicine cabinet against individual electronic patient records. A total of 231 vials of naloxone were dispensed. Correlations of these logs were made against electronic patient records of specific ED attendances. After excluding cases unrelated to illicit drug use, a total of 44 patients were identified. Patients for which the indication was not clearly identified were also excluded; therefore the 44 patients identified may not include all cases. For each patient, we collected data on age, post code, reasons for attendance, total ED attendances on record, admissions to hospital, self-discharge rates and death. Other than drug toxicity, reasons for hospital admissions included infected ulcers, cellulitis, deep vein thromboses and pulmonary emboli.

Table 1: Data on 44 patients requiring intravenous naloxone presenting to the ED Aug 2018-19

Attendances		Hospital Admissions		self-discharges	deaths	Postcodes	
In total	due to drug toxicity	In total	Directly due to drug toxicity			Fy1:16	FY5: 2
387	115	127	48	82	7	Fy2: 7	FY7: 3
						FY3: 5	FY8: 2
						Fy4: 2	PR: 4
							Other: 2

What does the data show?

BVH ED has a large number of attendances related to illicit drug use– and with it comes significant rates of morbidity and mortality.

What do we hope to achieve?

1. Introduction of take home intranasal naloxone to patients with substance use disorders presenting to the Emergency Department.
2. Create educational resources, signposting individuals to community services.
3. Introduce new referral pathways, eg. to the Homeless Health Hub, which provides nursing care to homeless individuals with ongoing physical health needs.
4. Update the existing policy on opioid misuse to include an updated referral pathway to Horizon, a blanket organisation which supports patients with substance use disorders in the area.

As of June 2021 this project is in progress with collaboration between the ED, Public Health Blackpool and other local organisations. As part of the wider multi agency project ADDER, we hope to provide a valuable contribution in combatting drug misuse and associated deaths in the UK.