

Improving access to pain medication review for patients with musculoskeletal conditions in West Lothian

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Aims

To speed up access to pain medication review for patients referred to MSK physiotherapy, to improve the patient journey, enhance patient outcomes and quality of life.

Methods: identifying problems and change ideas

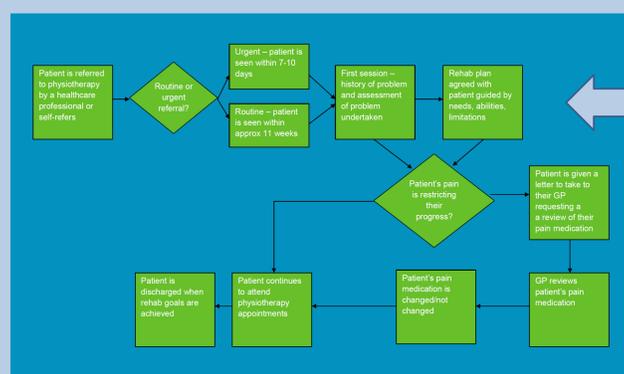
- GPs workforce/workload challenges
- Long waits for GP review to optimise pain management for patients
- Time-consuming referral process
- Potential impact on patient outcomes and quality of life



- Focus on patients with radicular arm or leg pain
- Referrals from MSK physiotherapists to primary care pharmacists in GP practices
- Pharmacists to carry out a medication review (telephone or face to face)

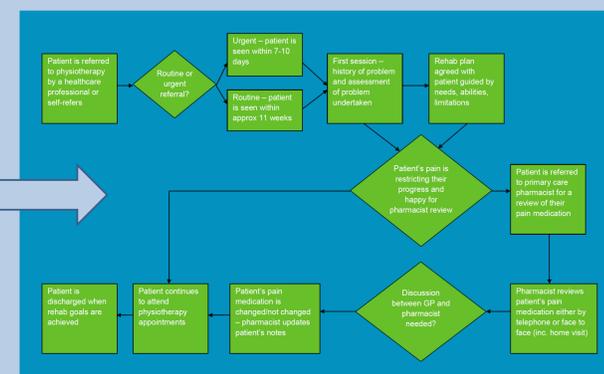
Methods: process improvements, data, tests of change

- Pilot in June 2017: referral process, criteria and measures
- Referral guidelines in December 2018 following pilot
- Primary care pharmacists in GP practices altered/initiated neuropathic pain relief
- Data monitored pharmacist intervention outcomes and waiting times for pharmacist review
- Pilot extended and is ongoing
- Refinements to process and model continue – amended referral form asks for best time for patient contact



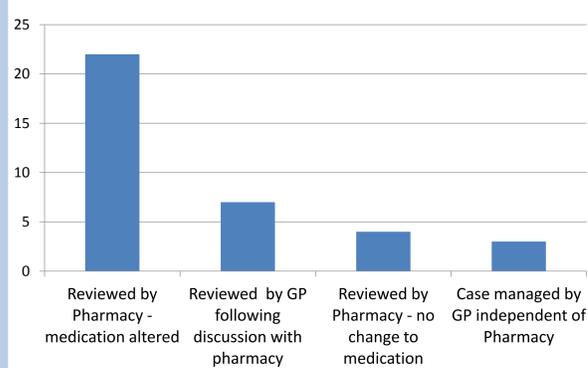
Process before the change – MSK physios refer patients to GPs for pain medication review

Process after the change – MSK physios refer patients to primary care pharmacist in GP practice for pain medication review, with onward referral to GP if necessary

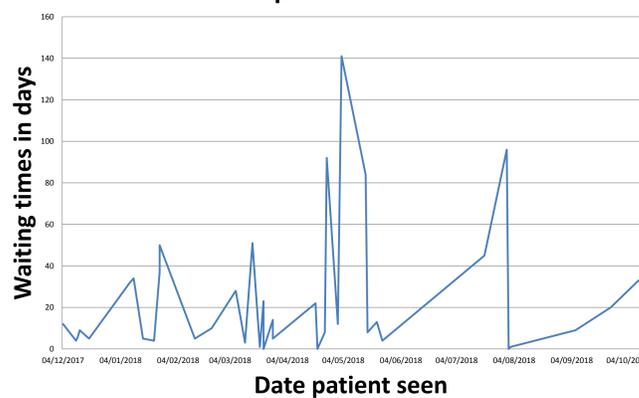


Outcomes/results

60% of patients referred had their medication altered by a pharmacist and 72% of patients did not need to see a GP



Waiting times for pharmacist review varied widely due to difficulties in contacting patients



“This project helped patients to be seen in a timely manner and reduced the need for patients to see their GP.”
MSK physiotherapist

“I found the pharmacist very helpful; the new system is great for questions you want answers to without wasting GP time.”
Patient

“Starting pain medication takes a significant amount of consultation time; seeing the pharmacist saves GP time, improves the patient’s experience, and improves compliance.”
GP

“Pharmacists can spend more time with patients to fully inform them about medication, discuss patient expectations, highlight online self-help resources and ensure patients are aware that a multi-factorial approach provides better outcomes.”
Primary care pharmacist

Conclusions

- This is an improved patient pathway which optimises patient outcomes and quality of life
- It provides timely, pharmacological advice to patients and also reduces unnecessary GP consultations
- Future changes include feedback from primary care pharmacists to the MSK physios about patient interventions

References

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3. British Medical Association - Working in a system that is under pressure March 2018