

Health and Clinical Excellence

THE NICE BULLETIN FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS

Improving patient involvement in decisions about medicines

A NICE guideline published in January outlined how healthcare professionals can involve and support patients in decisions about taking prescribed medicines.

Between 30 and 50% of medicines for long-term conditions are not used as prescribed. This can happen because of a failure to reach an informed agreement to the prescription in the first place or because of a failure to identify and provide the support that a patient needs later on.

The guideline recommends that healthcare professionals involve patients in the decision to prescribe medicines by explaining clearly the disease or condition and the pros and cons of treatment. The communication should be two-way, so that the healthcare professional is clear about what the patient expects from the treatment and the patient is able to make an informed decision about taking the medicines. The recommendations apply to all healthcare professionals who prescribe or dispense medicines or who have a role in making decisions about medicines with patients.

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Also in this issue:

Promoting physical activity for children and young people; launch of an independent study of value in new innovative health technologies; guidance published in January; guidance expected in February.



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Key recommendations include:

- Being aware that patients concerns about medicines, and whether they believe they need them can affect how and whether they take their prescribed medicine.
- Offering all patients the opportunity to be involved in making decisions about prescribed medicines. Establish what level of involvement in decision-making the patient would like.
- Accepting that the patient has the right to decide not to take a medicine, even if you do not agree with the decision.
- Recognising that non-adherence is common and that most patients do not always take their medicines as prescribed.

“Many patients feel that if they approach their healthcare professional about failure to take their medicines, they will be told off. The reason why they can’t take a particular medicine may be because they can’t open the packaging or their hectic lifestyle may make it difficult to take medicines at the same time each day.”

Alison Bowser, service user representative and Guideline Development Group member

- Ensuring that healthcare professionals involved in prescribing, dispensing or reviewing medicines have robust processes for communicating with other healthcare professionals involved in the patient’s care.

- Reviewing patient knowledge, understanding and concerns about medicines, and a patient’s view of their need for medicine, at intervals agreed with the patient, because these may change over time.

The guidance is available at www.nice.org.uk/CG76; for printed copies of the quick reference guide or ‘Understanding NICE guidance’ (information about the guidance for people who have been prescribed medicines), phone NICE publications 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote N1759 (quick reference guide) or N1760 (‘Understanding NICE guidance’).

Guidance issued 28 January 2009

Clinical guidelines

- Antisocial personality disorder: treatment, management and prevention
- Borderline personality disorder: treatment and management
- Medicines adherence: involving patients in decisions about prescribed medicines and supporting adherence

Technology appraisal guidance

- Cochlear implants for children and adults with severe to profound deafness
- Machine perfusion systems and cold static storage of kidneys from deceased donors

Public health guidance

- Promoting physical activity, active play and sport for pre-school and school-age children and young people in family, pre-school, school and community settings

Interventional procedures guidance

- Autologous blood injection for tendinopathy
- Functional electrical stimulation for drop foot of central neurological origin
- Infracoccygeal sacropexy using mesh for uterine prolapse repair
- Infracoccygeal sacropexy using mesh for vaginal vault prolapse repair
- Insertion of mesh uterine suspension sling (including sacrohysteropexy) for uterine prolapse repair

- Sacrocolpopexy using mesh for vaginal vault prolapse repair
- Sacrocolpopexy with hysterectomy using mesh for uterine prolapse repair
- Thoracoscopic epicardial radiofrequency ablation for atrial fibrillation
- Ultrasound-guided regional nerve block

Guidance expected to be issued on 25 February 2009

Clinical guidelines

- Breast cancer (advanced): diagnosis and treatment
- Breast cancer (early and locally advanced): diagnosis and treatment
- Rheumatoid arthritis: the management of rheumatoid arthritis in adults

Technology appraisal guidance

- Abdominal aortic aneurysms – endovascular stents
- Amantadine, oseltamivir and zanamivir for the treatment of influenza

Public health guidance

- Needle and syringe programmes: providing people who inject drugs with injecting equipment

Interventional procedures guidance

- Extracorporeal photopheresis for Crohn’s disease
- Intraocular lens implantation for correction of refractive error, with preservation of the natural lens
- Laparoscopic cystectomy (guidance review)

NICE publishes its guidance on the fourth Wednesday of every month. For information about consultations on guidance in development, see the NICE website. We also produce a free monthly newsletter, which contains details of forthcoming guidance. To receive it, please visit the NICE website and register your details.

Promoting physical activity for children and young people

Guidance promoting physical activity, active play and sport for all children and young people up to the age of 18 in family, pre-school, school and community settings was published by NICE in January.

National guidelines recommend that children and young people should do a minimum of 60 minutes of at least moderate-intensity physical activity each day. However, studies show that these levels are not being met. In a recent survey ('Health survey for England 2007', The Information Centre 2008) of those questioned, only 47% of girls and 66% of boys aged 15 reached the recommended levels of activity.

Physical activity not only contributes to both physical and mental wellbeing, it is essential for good health later in life. It can help prevent conditions and diseases including coronary heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers. Physical inactivity in England costs an estimated £8.2 billion each year – this includes the direct costs of treating diseases linked to lack of activity and the indirect costs caused through sickness absence.

“Obesity rates in this country are rocketing and with the number of children not taking part in physical activity increasing, this problem can only get worse. Dealing with the long-term consequences of obesity costs an estimated £2.5 billion each year, placing a huge strain on the health service. It’s important that we let children play, and don’t let society’s aversion to risk stop young people from being physically active.

“This guidance supports the ‘Change4Life’ campaign launched earlier this month, making strategic and practical recommendations to promote physical activity to children and young people in a variety of settings and so will help to ensure that this frightening trend is halted.”

Professor Mike Kelly, Director of the Centre for Public Health Excellence, NICE

The recommendations include:

National policy

- Deliver a long-term (minimum 5 years) national campaign to promote physical activity among children and young people.

High-level policy and strategy

- Ensure there is a coordinated local strategy to increase

physical activity among children and young people, their families and carers. The strategy should help achieve local area agreement targets.

Local strategic planning

- Identify groups of local children and young people who are unlikely to participate in at least 1 hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day and involve these children and young people in the design, planning and delivery of opportunities for physical activity.
- Ensure physical activity facilities are suitable for children and young people with different needs and their families.

Local organisations: planning, delivery and training

- Consult with girls and young women to find out what type of physical activities they prefer.

Local practitioners: delivery

- Groups and individuals who have regular contact with children, young people, their parents and carers should ensure parents and carers are aware of government advice that children and young people should undertake a minimum of 60 minutes moderate to vigorous physical activity a day.



“The guidance highlights that a balance needs to be struck between protecting our children and allowing and encouraging them to be active. It is natural for parents or carers to be concerned about a child’s safety, but it is important for children to develop their risk awareness and an understanding of their own abilities as necessary life skills which they can achieve with access to environments that stimulate their need to explore and safely challenge them, such as adventure playgrounds.”

Sarah Vaughan-Roberts, community member and guidance developer

The guidance is available at www.nice.org.uk/IPH17; for printed copies of the quick reference guide phone NICE publications 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote N1762.

NICE launches study of value in new innovative health technologies

NICE Chair, Professor Sir Mike Rawlins, has written to the Secretary of State for Health announcing a short study of how value is taken into account when looking at new health technologies. The study will involve submissions and the use of a series of workshops involving the healthcare industries, patients and the wider public, together with representatives of the NHS to explore this issue. Professor Sir Ian Kennedy, Emeritus Professor of health law, ethics and policy at University College London has agreed to lead it.

Sir Michael commented: "We are pleased that Professor Sir Ian Kennedy will oversee this study, which will look at whether particular forms of value are more important than others and will explore factors that should be taken into account in establishing the value of new health technologies.

"In his recent report on the future of the biotechnology industry in the UK, Sir David Cooksey stressed the importance of NICE and the pharmaceutical industry working towards a shared understanding of how to value innovative health technologies. NICE supports that view."

"Understanding the value is central to the work that NICE does in advising health professionals, patients and the wider public on the best approach to improving the quality and consistency of care provided by the NHS. Since NICE was established we have regularly consulted on our approach to valuing innovation and the question of how to establish value has always been part of the public debate around NICE decisions."

*Professor Sir Mike Rawlins,
Chair, NICE*

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This bulletin is produced to update MPs and Lords in Westminster and AMs in Cardiff on recently issued NICE guidance, alert you to forthcoming recommendations and ensure that you are familiar with NICE and our current work programme.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health. Its guidance is for healthcare professionals and patients and their carers to help them make decisions about treatment and healthcare. For further information about NICE you can visit www.nice.org.uk

NICE produces guidance in three areas of health.

- **Public health** – guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health for those working in the NHS, local authorities and the wider public and voluntary sector.
- **Health technologies** – guidance on the use of new and existing medicines, treatments and procedures within the NHS.
- **Clinical practice** – guidance on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS.

NICE guidance and recommendations are prepared by independent groups that include professionals working in the NHS and people who are familiar with the issues affecting patients and carers.

If you have any questions, comments or queries regarding NICE's current work programme or this bulletin, please contact Tony Beaman on 0207 045 2068 or tony.beaman@nice.org.uk

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