

HTA: Naltrexone to prevent relapse in Drug Misuse

Royal Collage of General Practitioners: Assessment Report comments

General comments

1. The report highlights the low rate of abstinence in opiate users and the high morbidity rate [2.3.2]
2. The report highlights the relatively low use of naltrexone – with only 11,000 – 14,000 prescription issued per annum – meaning that around 1500 –2000 patients use the drug
3. The report highlights the relative absence of good quality RCTs – only 3 trails met Jahad score of 3. this is important as the lack of evidence around efficacy might be due to the lack of trails rather than the intervention being ineffective
4. naltrexone may be effective as an adjunct to contingency management.
5. Overall, excellent review as it stands but I am disappointed that the review did not include depot or unlicensed preparations of naltrexone as these are increasingly being used. The vogue ascribed by a few is that the failure of oral naltrexone is entirely related to compliance – that is that the users do not take the drug. This would be overcome by naltrexone implants. It would have been useful to have had some comment on this route of use – albeit being an unlicensed medication.

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