

IMPLEMENTING INDEPENDENT & SUPPLEMENTARY NURSE PRESCRIBING WITHIN THE HAEMODIALYSIS UNIT – A PRESCRIBING PARTNERSHIP

M Gerrish, J Little
University Hospital of Leicester

PROBLEM: Patients within satellite haemodialysis units do not always have access to a medical practitioner. This may cause problems when prescriptions are required. Nursing staff have adopted many different approaches to resolve this problem over the years.

Amendments to the Prescription Only Medicines Order and changes to NHS regulations to allow the introduction of supplementary prescribing came into force on 4th April 2003. This allows nurses with the appropriate experience, training and qualification to prescribe for their patients.

PURPOSE: Within a 14-station haemodialysis satellite unit a supplementary prescribing partnership has been successfully established. Unlike independent nurse prescribing, there is no specific formulary or list of medicines for supplementary prescribing. Provided medicines are prescribable by a doctor at NHS expense, and that they are referred to in the patient's Clinical Management Plan, supplementary prescribers are able to prescribe from almost the full range of drugs contained in the British National Formulary.

DESIGN: Within the unit, Clinical Management Plans have been implemented for haemodialysis patients making reference to appropriate guidelines and agreed protocols for treatment, in consultation with the independent prescriber. These include areas such as dialysis adequacy, access management, anti-coagulation, anaemia management, MRSA treatment & prophylaxis, antihypertensive therapy, calcium and phosphate control and exit site or line infection. These can be individualised as required.

FINDINGS: 100% of patients within the unit (75 to date) have consented to the nurse prescribing for them under the Care Management Plan. The advantages of nurse prescribing have been identified as:

- A service which is more appropriate & responsive to patients individual needs
- Faster & more effective adjustment of regime
- More appropriate use of nurses' extensive professional skills
- More effective use of resources
- Less travelling & consequent saving of time and other associated costs
- A holistic approach to care

CONCLUSION: Supplementary prescribing enhances nursing practice by empowering those who are best placed to make decisions regarding care and treatment for their patients. The patients appear confident in the ability of the nurse within the haemodialysis unit to prescribe competently.

RELEVANCE: Independent & supplementary nurse prescribing is of benefit to patient care, meeting the demands of an expanding patient population. It is recognition of the skill and experience required of haemodialysis nurse practitioners.