



Background

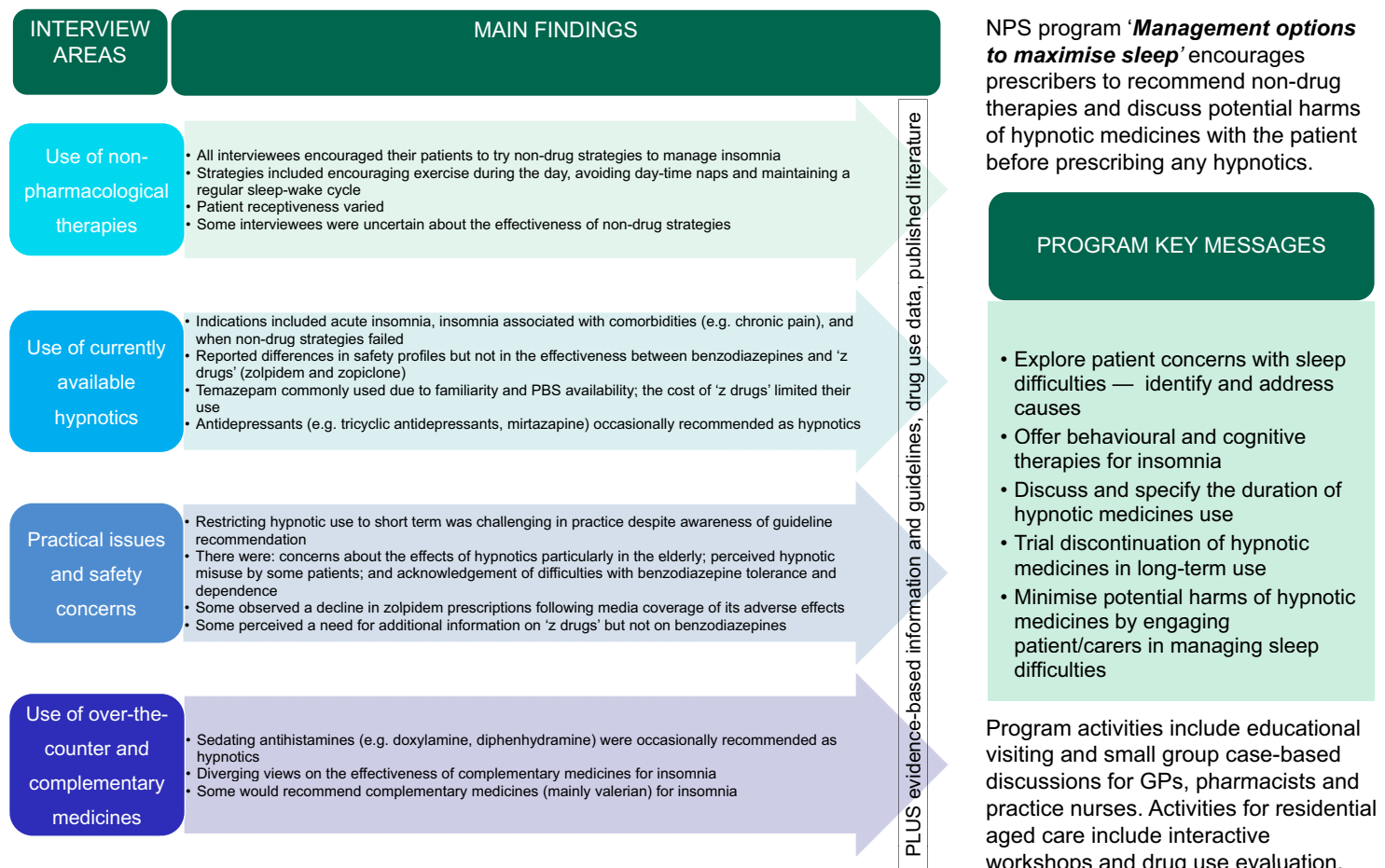
Between 2006–08, insomnia was the most common sleep disorder (80%) encountered in general practice and more than 95% of insomnia problems were managed by hypnotic medicines.¹ Behavioural and cognitive therapies have comparable efficacy to hypnotic medicines for all sleep measures^{2,3} and a longer duration of efficacy compared to drug therapy.³

Aim

To explore perceptions of general practitioners (GPs) and pharmacists on hypnotics for managing insomnia to inform NPS therapeutic program development.

Methods

Semi-structured telephone interviews (15 – 20 minutes) were conducted with 12 practising GPs and 10 practising pharmacists, recruited using convenience sampling. The interview notes were thematically analysed.



NPS program '**Management options to maximise sleep**' encourages prescribers to recommend non-drug therapies and discuss potential harms of hypnotic medicines with the patient before prescribing any hypnotics.

PROGRAM KEY MESSAGES

- Explore patient concerns with sleep difficulties — identify and address causes
- Offer behavioural and cognitive therapies for insomnia
- Discuss and specify the duration of hypnotic medicines use
- Trial discontinuation of hypnotic medicines in long-term use
- Minimise potential harms of hypnotic medicines by engaging patient/carers in managing sleep difficulties

Program activities include educational visiting and small group case-based discussions for GPs, pharmacists and practice nurses. Activities for residential aged care include interactive workshops and drug use evaluation.



Conclusion

Interviews with practising clinicians provide valuable insight on clinical issues, in this case hypnotics for insomnia. In conjunction with other information sources, these findings enable NPS to develop programs that are relevant to practising clinicians.

Acknowledgements:
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References:
1. Charles J, et al. Aust Fam Physician 2009;38:283. 2. Riemann D, Peris ML. Sleep Med Rev 2009;13:205-14. 3. Smith MT, et al. Am J Psychiat 2002;159:5-11.