



National Prescribing Service Limited

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nurses to help improve pain management in aged care facilities

Pain is common among aged care residents and is often under-treated. To help address this problem, National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) has developed a no-cost quality improvement tool to assist nurses determine the appropriateness of analgesic use by residents.

Analgesic use for persistent pain in aged care homes Drug Use Evaluation (DUE) is the third DUE toolkit available from the NPS. The first focused on reviewing the use of hypnotics (benzodiazepine and non-benzodiazepine) in treating insomnia, while the second DUE centred on antipsychotic drugs in behavioural disturbance of dementia.

“To help rectify the under-diagnosis and under-treatment of pain, aged care homes should have a systematic screening method in place”, NPS Education and Quality Assurance Program Manager, Judith Mackson said.

The NPS DUE toolkits promote optimal drug therapy by monitoring drug use through comparisons with specific standards and initiation of appropriate actions when drug use is inconsistent with these standards. It is a cyclic process and is most effective if the cycle is undertaken as a quality activity.

Completing this DUE will allow nurses to:

- Determine the appropriateness of the use of analgesic medication for managing persistent pain within the aged care home
- Identify opportunities for improving quality use of these drugs, and act on them
- Assist aged care homes to meet components of the Residential Care Standards issued by the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency

“A member of the nursing staff may lead the project and collect the initial data, but a multidisciplinary team approach is ideal for successfully completing a DUE – preferably with a pharmacist, GP, Medication Advisory Committee or quality group to assist and advise during the process,” Judith Mackson said.

Nurses should register their participation online and upon completion of the DUE answer the post-activity evaluation survey. Following evaluation, DUE activity qualifies for 15 Continuing Nurse Education points from the Royal College of Nursing Australia.

The toolkits are downloadable at:

http://www.nps.org.au/health_professionals/drug_use_evaluation_due_programs

For more information about the NPS DUE toolkits, contact Aine Heaney at NPS on (02) 8217 8700 or aheaney@nps.org.au.

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