

## **OPIOID TAPERING ALGORITHM**1-9

## Patient who is taking opioids No meaningful improvement Cause of pain Adverse effects Risk of harm outweighs Signs of aberrant in pain and/or function has resolved potential benefits are intolerable behaviour Discuss the decision to taper an opioid with the patient Listen to the patient's beliefs and concerns about, and motivations for, tapering Reassure the patient and discuss how you can monitor and support them Does the patient agree to tapering? YES NO goals and preferences Reinforce the rationale for tapering including potential of continuing long term **Fast taper** Slow taper Appropriate after a short period Appropriate after a longer period of opioid treatment (< 3 months) of opioid treatment Reduce daily opioid dose Reduce daily opioid dose each week by 10%-25% each **month** by 10%-25% of the starting dose of the starting dose Considerations for patients at high risk of opioid harm Schedule frequent reviews and at each Review the patient frequently, emphasise the benefits of tapering appointment: and assess response against set goals ask about and emphasise the benefits of tapering assess risk of harm Tapering progressing well Tapering encounters challenges ▶ Facilitate psychosocial support for the patient improved function, controlled pain, eg, increased pain, withdrawal ▶ Check for co-prescription of benzodiazepines reduced side effects symptoms, previously unrecand other sedatives that significantly increase ognised opioid use disorder risk of serious harm Consider rationalising to a single opioid if applicable ► Consider staged supply and/or naloxone ► Consider specialist input if: Taper to the lowest effective dose, Pause and re-evaluate the which may mean stopping the opioid patient is experiencing serious challenges patient's goals, pain, clinical status, coping mechanisms and the main problem is opioid dependency Some patients may not entirely stop using opioids but any dose rather than pain tapering rate Consider simple supportive therapy or clonidine to manage withdrawal symptoms

References available online at: nps.org.au/opioids-card-refs

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to be individualised

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