OPIOID PRESCRIBERS: Educate Your Patients

Chronic pain affects millions of Americans, and opioid analgesics can provide relief for some patients who sorely need it. Over the past decade there has been a fourfold increase in opioid prescribing. However, that rise coincides with an increase in unintentional and intentional abuse of opioids, many involving extended-release, long-acting (ER/LA) formulations. As a prescriber, one of the most challenging situations you face is how to effectively communicate with your patients about the safe use of opioids for chronic pain.

EFFECTIVELY MANAGE THERAPY & ENGAGEMENT

Why Your Guidance is Important

50% of participants in a joint Kansas State/Michigan State study older than 50 failed to notice a warning label on prescription vials

Why Safe Use & Management are Important

75% of prescription drug overdose deaths in 2010 involved opioid analgesics

Consider a Patient Prescriber Agreement

- Helps patients and family members understand the goals of treatment as well as safe use of medications
- Can include the importance of the need for follow-up visits, to adhere with appropriate monitoring for benefits and harms, and to safeguard medications

Discuss the Safe Use of ER/LAs

- Explain how to take ER/LA opioids as prescribed
- Discuss product-specific information about any medication you are prescribing

Outline the Dangers of Sharing

- Sharing ER/LA opioids is illegal, is a major health risk, and can have dangerous side effects for unintended users.
- 75% of people who misuse prescription opioids use drugs prescribed to someone else

Explain the Need for Safe Storage

- Advise the need for patients to keep ER/LA opioids in a safe and secure location away from children, family members and visitors
- 56% of teens say it’s easy to get prescription drugs from their parents’ medicine cabinets
- 10% of teens admit abusing or misusing a prescription painkiller in the past year

THERE’S MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE

1. Empower yourself to work through difficult decisions regarding patients and opioids.
2. Get validated tools, skills, and confidence in how to safely prescribe opioids for patients that may benefit.
3. Implement systems that minimize the risks of opioid misuse including addiction and overdose.

Participate in a free, CME/CE-certified online education program on Safe and Competent Opioid Prescribing Education (SCOPE). www.scopeofpain.com

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