Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine

Addiction Medicine Update

RACP Congress 2016

Dr Matthew Frei, AChAM President 2014-16
A/Prof Adrian Reynolds, AChAM President 2016-18
Update

- What is addiction medicine?
- Clinical & public/population alcohol & drug health
- The way forward
What is addiction medicine?
Huge burden of disease-small specialty

- Massive health burden & modest number of Fellows and trainees
- Crosses all areas of health
- Setting is right for a growth in specialty numbers
Addiction medicine as clinical clean up crew

- Specialty that steps in when there is chaos and mess
- Human behaviour disrupts clinical care*
- Risks start escalating
- Expertise in “under-understood”, unattractive and image-problematic field

*At patient and governance levels
Addiction medicine in clinical practice & public health: an update
Alcohol: public health & clinical work

- College alcohol policy
- Public & community culture changes
  - Reduce price, access & promotion
  - Volumetric taxation & review of WET
  - Regulation of outlets

- Clinical role of addiction medicine
  - Engaging primary care
  - Medical management & innovation
Pharmaceutical drug use: public health & clinical work

• Largest growth field in clinical work for addiction medicine in last decade
  – Misuse and low value prescribing of opioid analgesics, benzodiazepines & antipsychotic drugs
  – Addiction medicine embedded in some pain clinics

• Public & policy
  – Professional clinical practice guidelines
  – Training packages
  – ERRCD (real time controlled drug monitoring)

• EVOLVE
Changing opioid prescribing practice and culture

• Precautions in opioid prescribing
  – Keep dose under 50mg MME, caution above 90mg MME (CDC, 2016)
  – Review opioid therapy regularly
  – *Opioid therapy is not indicated for the long term management of chronic noncancer pain based on current evidence* (HNE, 2015)

• Growth in OTC codeine use

• Role of maintenance opioid therapy programs
Methamphetamine

- Emerging evidence of increase in regular/dependent users of crystalline methamphetamine in last 3-5 years
  - ED & hospital separations
  - Ambulance attendances
  - Drug treatment episodes

- Medication assisted therapy

- National Ice Task Force

Degenhardt et al MJA 2016
Other frontiers: an update
Cannabis as medicine

• New model in approach to substance of dependence
• Limited research supporting cannabis’ benefit in (>100) promoted indications (over existing agents)
• Magical drug?
• “Evidence” based on emotionally potent anecdote
• US experience of conflating legalisation with medicalisation
Novel psychoactive substances

- Online drug markets
- “research chemicals”
- Uncertain legal status
- Adult/head/smoke shop products
- Synthetic cannabis-like agents
- Other synthetics
- Difficult to detect in immunoassay urine toxicology
Tobacco control

- Nicotine vaporising devices
  - RACP position statement
  - Recent statements by RCP & PHE
  - New FDA regulations and EU TPD
The way forward for addiction medicine
The way forward

- A dynamic field crossing internal medicine, behavioural sciences and public health
- A modest size specialty “punching above weight” given breadth and burden of clinical issues
- Need to grow numbers to address increasing role in policy, clinical expertise and governance
- Ice task force plan for physician like item numbers from November 2016
Thank you

myfrei@gmail.com