

A user friendly resource increases psychiatric provider comfort and knowledge in initiation and management of an outpatient benzodiazepine taper.



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AIM STATEMENT

To establish an evidence based resource (SMARTPHRASE) for providers to enhance the following clinical skills:

- 1) Talking about risks of long term benzodiazepine use with patients
- 2) Knowing when a benzodiazepines taper is appropriate
- 3) How to develop a taper plan
- 4) How to access teaching points for clinicians and patients.

INTRODUCTION

Benzodiazepines are commonly prescribed sedative-anxiolytic medications for the management of anxiety and mood disorders. Long-term use of benzodiazepines is associated with serious adverse events. Many individuals perceive benefits from the use of this medication class. As a result, discontinuation can lead to conflict between patients and providers. While the practice of prescribing benzodiazepines has evolved away from long-term prescriptions, there remains a need for educating patients and providers on the topic of safe use and effectively discontinuing these medications.

This project sought to establish an evidence based and easy to use resource (Epic Smartphrases) for providers that addresses the following:

- 1) Discussing risks of long term benzodiazepine use with patients
- 2) Identifying when a benzodiazepine taper is appropriate
- 3) Developing a taper plan
- 4) Providing teaching points for clinicians and patients

METHODS

1. Current barriers for initiating and managing benzodiazepine tapers in the clinic setting were identified through discussions with clinic providers.
2. Based on these findings, a work group of PGY4 psychiatry residents was formed to address this growing clinical need.
3. Input was gathered from addiction faculty experts and literature review was performed. This information was synthesized into a user friendly clinical resource (in the form of an Epic Smartphrase).
4. This resource was then presented in a formal training to psychiatric clinic providers.
5. Pre- and post-training surveys were utilized to quantify knowledge and comfort with management of benzodiazepine prescription and discontinuation practices.



RESULTS

Pre- and post-training surveys were administered to an initial cohort of PGY-3 Psychiatry Residents and nurse practitioners (n=8) at the University of MN. Provider responses to pre- and post-training surveys indicated robust positive improvements in knowledge and comfort related to benzodiazepine management and discontinuation

CONCLUSIONS

Benzodiazepine prescribing is a complex and common clinical encounter. At a baseline, providers frequently report a level of discomfort and lack of knowledge around managing and discontinuing benzodiazepines. This project sought to remedy these concerns by developing a user friendly resource in the form of an Epic Smartphrase. The results of pre- and post- training surveys demonstrated that this clinical resource can improve provider knowledge and comfort in tapering benzodiazepines.

LIMITATIONS

- Initial cohort consisted of small number of psychiatric providers
- Measure experience of patients who are prescribed a benzodiazepine taper that utilizes this resource
- Longer term survey to measure ease of implementation of the SMARTPHRASE in the clinic setting

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Disseminate resource to other clinicians, such as primary care providers, who regularly manage benzodiazepines and gather more pre and post training data.

ACCESS THESE SMARTPHRASES THROUGH EPIC

- [psymanagebenzoassessment](#)
- [psymanagebenzotaperschedule](#)
- [psymanagebenzowithdrawl](#)

REFERENCES

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