



Conference bytes

What we learnt at the Clinical Pharmacy Congress (May 2024) about...

... new funding opportunities for pharmacy professionals through ARRS

Funding for pharmacy technician apprentices and education supervisors for them will soon be made available to PCNs via “the direct patient contact” option – a proposed new category of the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme. Also available will be the option to claim funding for clinical pharmacists to be designated supervisors for trainee pharmacists, and designated prescribing practitioners for other pharmacists who are doing their independent prescribing qualification.

Local decisions are expected regarding how the funding will be accessed; more information is expected to be released by NHS England and Integrated Care Systems in the near future.

David Webb, chief pharmaceutical officer, NHS England

... maintaining the four pillars of heart failure treatment

Around three-quarters of patients who have their mineralocorticoid receptor agonist (MRA; eg, spironolactone) withheld due to hyperkalaemia never have it restarted, despite the drug reducing mortality significantly for patients diagnosed with heart failure with reduced ejection fraction. Long-term use of a potassium binder (eg, sodium zirconium), an SGLT2 inhibitor or a loop diuretic could allow the MRA therapy to be continued.

Rhys Williams, cardiology pharmacist, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

... not feeling isolated as a GP/PCN pharmacist

In primary care, the occasions where you need to make an urgent clinical decision are very rare. Do not feel pressurised to make a clinical decision on the spot – there is always time to discuss it with colleagues. If a clinical decision makes you feel uncomfortable, it is probably wrong.

Dr Graham Stretch, president, PCPA

... the association between diabetes and low testosterone

Lack of testosterone increases insulin resistance and HbA1c. Around 40% of men with type 2 diabetes have symptomatic testosterone deficiency. All men with type 2 diabetes should be screened for testosterone deficiency – eg, using the [Aging Male Symptom scale](#). Anyone scoring more than 27 should have a blood test to check their testosterone levels – with any deficiency treated (unless contraindicated).

Saqib Mahmud, professor of diabetes and internal medicine, New Vision University, Georgia

... why we should all take an interest in pharmacogenomics

There are 1,551 genetic variants of the CYP2C19 gene, and 10 in every 36 people have a non-normal genotype – causing them to be poor, intermediate or rapid metabolisers. This affects the suitability of several commonly used drugs, such as clopidogrel, citalopram and omeprazole. The anticipated publication in July of a NICE technology appraisal into a test to identify people's CYP2C19 genetic phenotype could generate a significant opportunity for all pharmacists to lead on this evolving area of precision medicine.

Aris Saoulidis, clinical pharmacy lead, East NHS Genomic Medicine Service Alliance

... monitoring bone health in early menopause

Patients diagnosed with premature ovarian insufficiency or early menopause she should be considered for a bone density scan at diagnosis, and have it repeated at 2-3 years. Women who are suddenly struggling with diabetic control, sleep disturbance or intentional weight loss in their 40s should be considered for menopause.

Danny Bartlett, lead pharmacist, Horsham Central PCN

... generating directly observed evidence for an advanced or consultant pharmacist portfolio

If you are struggling to get colleagues to observe you in one of your clinics, offer to go to one of their clinics and manage one of their patients; that way, they can observe you without it taking time out of their clinic.

Calum Polwart, consultant pharmacist, South Tees NHS Foundation Trust

... enabling community pharmacy to access GP records

Over the next few weeks and months, community pharmacists will be able to access GP records to see blood test results for Pharmacy First.

Pallavi Dawda, head of delivery for community pharmacy clinical strategy, NHS England

... the benefits of lowering cholesterol at a young age

Lowering a patient's LDL-cholesterol by 1mmol/L will reduce their risk of a cardiovascular event by around 50% over 50 years.

Niraj Lakhani, lead clinical pharmacist, Willows Health

Gareth Malson
PCPA editor