

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MEDS

For many people taking medication is a necessary part of life

Understanding and taking your medicines as directed is an important step towards a longer, healthier lifestyle.

Medicines Use Reviews (MUR's) in Community Pharmacies

Medicines are frequently and widely used in the NHS and account for 12% of NHS expenditure (Department of Health). There are over 15 million people in the UK with at least one long term medical condition such as diabetes, asthma and coronary heart disease managed through medicines.

It is estimated that as much as half of all medicines are not taken as prescribed by the Doctor according to the National Pharmacy Association.

A Medicine Use Review (MUR) is an NHS advanced service offered free to patients by accredited pharmacists since April 2005. It has multiple benefits for patients and the NHS budget as well as supporting public health. It involves an in depth discussion with the pharmacist in a private consultation room to discuss all the patients medication – prescribed and over the counter and also gives the opportunity for the pharmacist to pass on further healthy living advice or signpost the patient to other relevant services.

An MUR should identify potential problems with the medication to improve patients understanding of their treatment and therefore its effectiveness e.g. if the patient has previously been taking their medication incorrectly. An MUR contributes to reducing NHS waste by ensuring that the medications are taken correctly and indeed that they are being taken. Figures from the World Health Organisation suggest that wasted medicines cost the economy in England between £100 million and £300 million per year. The reasons for this are varied and complex – they include issues like side effects, misunderstandings, lack of appreciation of importance. The MUR is designed to address these issues on a one to one patient basis.

Over 2 million MUR's have been conducted in over 8,000 pharmacies across England between April 2011 and March 2012.

Speak to a friendly face at your local community pharmacy



Make the most of your Medication Past studies proving the benefits of MUR's

One example of a study to demonstrate the effectiveness of MUR's was one undertaken on asthma patients. A significant number of patients reported an improvement in their measure of asthma control as a result of an MUR. (NPA)

A further study on asthma patients concluded that 30% of them had not seen the GP or practice nurse in the previous 12 months! The two most common requirements in those MUR consultations were patient education and device checking namely inhaler technique which can make all the difference between good and bad asthma control. (NPA)

A further study by one of the larger multiples surveyed 400 MUR patients. They found that 75% enjoyed participating in the MUR and that they valued the service and they felt that they had gained confidence about their medication as a result. (NPA and PCPA evaluation report 2010).

The vast majority of patients find MUR's useful and helpful in solving medication issues. The greatest benefit claimed by patients was the better understanding of their medicines, which improves patient compliance and safety.

Summary of Benefits of MUR's

Benefits to Patients

Improving a patients understanding of their condition and treatment should:

- Improve compliance with prescribed medication
- Improve health outcomes
- Improve quality of life
- Increase ownership of condition and treatment
- Encourage or improve self-care and self management of long term conditions

Benefits to Community Pharmacists

The opportunity to increase the active participation in the patient care pathway will:

- Improve patient health outcomes
- Improve patient loyalty
- Improve pharmacists satisfaction within their professional role
- Improve collaborative working with other healthcare professionals

Community Pharmacy Unfulfilled Potential

Why MUR's in Pharmacy-Pharmacists are trusted, respected, approachable and knowledgeable about medicines and available often without an appointment.

Since October 2011 NHS employers and PSNC have negotiated that half of the patients having an MUR must be from the three National Target Groups as follows;

Patients taking any of the following High Risk Medications:

- NSAID's (e.g. Ibuprofen)
- ANTICOAGULANTS (e.g. Warfarin)
- ANTIPLATELETS DIURETICS (e.g. Aspirin)
- DIURETICS (e.g. Bendroflumethiazde)
- Patients recently discharged from hospital who had changes made to their medicines while they were in hospital
- Patients with respiratory disease e.g. asthma

Further benefits can be realised from the MUR service by bolting on additional checks such as in falls, diabetes or respiratory disease. For further details see the SY&B Respiratory MURs project write up.

Benefits to GP's

Making a difference to the fact that 50% of patients do not comply with some element of their prescribed treatment.

A large proportion of GP appointments are taken up by patients with long-term conditions – improved compliance will allow practitioners to spend appropriate time with the chronically ill or patients with complex conditions.

A high proportion of hospital re-admissions in the elderly are as a direct result of poor compliance with prescribed medication. There is also recent evidence that 33% of medicine-related hospital admissions are caused by poor adherence.

Support cost-effective prescribing and help GP's to meet QOF targets.

More generally MUR's can lead to a reduction in prescribed medicines wastage and patients getting the best from their prescribed medicines.

We wish to work with local stakeholders to find ways to better use the skills of Community Pharmacy teams.