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For immediate release

Patient benefits from respiratory MURs scheme confirmed

An analysis of results from a respiratory MUR project in the south of England has demonstrated significant improvements in patient outcomes, with the interventions leading to better asthma control and COPD symptom management.

The inhaler technique improvement project has seen more than 5,100 MURs delivered across 206 pharmacies, with more than 800 “secondary intervention”, or follow up, MURs also completed.

As part of the MURs, pharmacists carried out asthma control and COPD assessment tests and recorded the results in an electronic system. An analysis of the recorded data, covering 4,600 asthma control tests and 448 COPD assessment tests, has shown:

- The number of MURs being provided by pharmacies increased during the project.
- In relative terms, 40 per cent of people with asthma showed better asthma control during the time studied, while 55 per cent of COPD patients showed an improvement in symptom management.
- There was evidence of improved asthma control between the first and second MURs – at the second MUR there was a 40 per cent relative increase in the number of people achieving a test score representing good asthma control. This increase was statistically significant.
- There was evidence of improved COPD management following the intervention – at the second MUR more people achieved test scores indicating a less severe impact on their lives from COPD. The improvement was statistically significant.
- Analysis of data on emergency asthma and COPD admissions showed a positive association between the introduction of the project and changes in emergency hospital admissions.

Gary Warner, chair of the PSNC service development subcommittee, and contractor at Regent Pharmacy on the Isle of Wight, said: “This project was the next step following the success of respiratory MUR programmes on the Isle of Wight and then in Portsmouth, and it has delivered some very exciting results. Improvements in patient outcomes that are statistically significant are always a pleasure to see because they give irrefutable proof of the benefits of services. The finding that the patient outcome data had helped to change GPs’ attitudes to MURs says a great deal about what evidence can do.

“Pharmacists might think that taking part in this sort of project and recording data sounds onerous, but in fact being able to see that they were really making a difference to patients encouraged most pharmacists. They were doing the job because they wanted to improve people’s health, and this analysis has shown that they could.”

Alastair Buxton, head of NHS services at PSNC, said: “This study really hits the spot. It’s a great example of pharmacy interventions delivering real patient benefits and associated cost savings and as such it provides exactly the sort of evidence community pharmacy needs to help persuade the NHS to continue investing in services. We will certainly be highlighting these findings as we continue to push to develop community pharmacy’s role in the reformed NHS.”



Simon Selo, Assistant Director of Policy and Service Development at Asthma UK, said: “We are delighted to see the difference this innovative project can make to the lives of people with asthma. We know that good inhaler technique is an essential component of good asthma control but that it is not always followed by either healthcare professionals or people with asthma. We hope these experiences and learning will be widely disseminated across primary and secondary care so that more people with asthma can benefit from this project.”

Notes to Editors

About the Inhaler Technique Improvement Project

- The inhaler technique improvement project was delivered across nine PCTs – Berkshire East, Berkshire West, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Portsmouth City and Southampton City – between April 2011 and August 2012.
- Local initiatives within the project were organised at PCT level, but all were funded by NHS South Central. They included training, equipment (such as innovative inhaler technique devices) and publicity support. Some pharmacies were also funded to deliver extra MURs.
- The project saw pharmacists trained in the effective use of inhalers and incorporating this into their MURs. In an online survey, pharmacists agreed the project had been well received by their patients and that the training had enabled them to effectively deal with their concerns. PCT project leads also reported that pharmacists’ clinical knowledge had been improved, along with their interactions with their patients and their ability to deliver MURs.
- Data on peoples’ control of asthma and COPD symptoms was captured during the MURs on an electronic system - the Enhanced Services Monitoring and Quality system.
- In the analysis, the results of 4,600 asthma control tests, carried out before and after MURs, were considered, along with those from 448 COPD assessment tests.
- Given the costs of poor inhaler technique and of emergency asthma admissions to hospital, the authors called the inhaler project “a relatively low cost-high impact intervention”.
- The project used innovative devices such as the two tone inhaler – this can help people to perfect their inhaler technique by emitting two tones if users breathe in too rapidly, one if the inhalation is correct, and none if the rate of inspiration is too slow.
- The incorporation of tests and data capturing in the MURs had given the reviews a structure that was both “helpful and motivating” for patients and practitioners, the report authors found. The use of the second MURs enabled both people with asthma and pharmacists to see the impact of the interventions, which helped to maintain motivation, they said.
- The analysis of the project can be viewed at: <http://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/south-east-coast-respiratory-programme/news/formal-evaluation-of-the-inhaler-technique-improvement-project/?searchterm=evaluation%20of%20inhaler%20technique%20improvement>

About Asthma UK

- Asthma UK is the charity dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the 5.4 million people in the UK whose lives are affected by asthma.
- For up-to-date news on asthma, information and publications, visit the Asthma UK website asthma.org.uk.
- For independent and confidential advice on asthma, call the Asthma UK Adviceline, which is staffed by asthma nurse specialists. It is open weekdays from 9am to 5pm on 0800 121 62 44

About PSNC

- PSNC (The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee) is the body that represents community pharmacies in England and Wales on NHS matters. It is recognised by the Secretary of State for Health as the representative of community pharmacy on these matters.



- PSNC represents and promotes the interests of 10,500 pharmacy contractors (owners) in England.
- It is the role of PSNC to liaise with the Department of Health and representatives of the NHS in England to negotiate the contractual terms for the provision of NHS community pharmacy services.
- PSNC's main objective is to secure the best possible NHS service opportunities, remuneration, terms and conditions for NHS pharmacy contractors in England.

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