

West Coast Medical Centres

Date effective: 6/01/2017

Review date: 6/01/2020

Drugs of dependence prescribing policy (opioids and benzodiazepines)

- New patients will not be prescribed drugs of dependence without a full clinical assessment that includes accurate medical information from the previous prescriber.
- The practice policy is not to prescribe more than an average daily morphine equivalent dose (MED) of 80-100 mg without further validation (eg less than 64 mg oxycodone).
- As a general rule the prescription of strong opioid medication should be limited to 3 months with a plan to de-escalate treatment after this time.
- An application for prescribing S8 medications for more than 60 days will be made to the Pharmaceutical Services Board.
- A treatment plan including a patient contract for opioid/benzodiazepine prescribing to be considered for all patients.
- Requests for repeat prescriptions will require a planned routine appointment. No walk-in appointments for medication refills will be granted.
- Prescribing authorisation of registrars to be limited as per the separate position statement and prescribing of Schedule 8 medicines and long term benzodiazepines will require discussion with a senior practitioner within the practice.
- There is limited evidence of efficacy and potential risk of harm to patients with chronic non cancer pain taking opioids and therefore treatment needs to be reviewed on a regular basis to assess whether the benefits of continuing treatment outweigh the risks.
- The prescribing of long term benzodiazepines is clinically necessary in a minority of patients and generally the risk of harm outweighs the benefits. Consideration should be given to reducing and eventually ceasing long term benzodiazepines.
- The practice has a zero tolerance to violence and threatening behaviour towards staff.