



AFP in Practice questions are designed to get you started in a small group learning (SGL) activity in your practice or with colleagues. Requirements to earn 40 Category 1 CPD points for a SGL activity are: minimum of four and a maximum of 10 people, minimum of 8 hours of discussion in a year, and at least two GPs. Groups may include anyone else who has an interest (ie. practice nurses, community health workers, allied health professionals). A kit with all the instructions and forms you need is available at www.racgp.org.au/afpinpractice.

Carolyn O'Shea

Learning objectives



After completion of this activity participants will be able to:

- apply advanced communication skills to a problem in a consultation
- discuss critically a range of options to manage a drug misuse problem
- recognise and cite evidence for and against a view of whether a problem exists
- suggest challenges and possible solutions to professional role challenges
- describe the local addiction medicine services and how to access appropriate services for your patients.

Category 1 – SGL questions

Domain 1

Communication skills and the patient-doctor relationship

ICPC codes: A86, A01

The issue of drugs coming up in a consultation can provide a range of opportunities to utilise advanced communication skills.

• Suggested learning activities:

The article by Lubman and Baker in this issue of *Australian Family Physician* about cannabis discusses the use of motivational interviewing techniques to assist patients. In pairs, role play a consultation where the general practitioner tries to assist a patient presenting with lack of energy and motivation, who also uses cannabis, to make the link between their health issues and cannabis use and make changes.

The article by Monheit on prescription drug misuse raises issues of chronic pain and opioid use plans. In pairs, negotiate a plan with a patient you know well in your practice who you have assessed as potentially suitable for a trial of opioids.

Domain 2

Applied professional knowledge and skills

ICPC codes: A86, A01

A range of knowledge and skills can be required to manage drug misuse problems.

• Suggested learning activities:

The article on prescription drug misuse includes three case studies. Break into groups and each discuss a case study in the article. Then come back together as a big group and discuss the issues and management.

One of the things that can be required is acute withdrawal management. As a group discuss your experiences (or lack of) in this area, for example opiate withdrawal. Investigate what is involved in acute withdrawal management from a medical perspective. What other skills and knowledge would you need to assist a patient with opiate withdrawal? What other services may need to be involved?

Domain 3

Population health and the context of general practice

ICPC codes: A86, A01

Some issues are straightforward; others have areas of uncertainty. Monheit's article on prescription drug misuse includes the question, 'Is there a problem?'

- Suggested learning activity: break into two teams and debate the topic: 'There is no significant prescription drug misuse problem, the real issue is undertreatment of legitimate chronic pain'.

Domain 4

Professional and ethical role

ICPC code: A86

At times we choose elements of a professional role to fulfil, at other times the person walking through the consulting room door chooses it for us!

• Suggested learning activities:

One of the group may have experience as an opioid pharmacotherapy prescriber, or perhaps you can invite someone to the group who has such experience. How have they found the role? How does it integrate into general practice? Does it create any professional or ethical dilemmas? How were they resolved?

A long standing patient, who is the parent of a 16 year old boy, and who you have not seen for a long time, presents one afternoon. The parent has come to discuss how you can help her son, who has been using 'party drugs' when he goes out, as described in the article by Frei in this issue of *AFP*. The son has told the parent it is 'none of your business' and that he is not going to see the doctor... 'no need.' Discuss as a group how you can approach this consultation.

Domain 5

Organisational and legal dimensions

ICPC code: A86

One of the important roles of the general practitioner is to assist patients to engage with other relevant local services.

- Suggested learning activity: investigate your local addiction medicine services. Where are they? What services do they offer? What is not available locally? How do they accept and manage referrals? Where are the local methadone prescribing and dispensing services? It may be possible to visit the service or ask someone from the service to come and talk to your group.