



Celebrating Cessation

Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association
Tobacco Cessation Program

Article Reviews: Chantix

A review of several current articles on Chantix shows growing concerns over Chantix's (varenicline) potential psychiatric side effects. Since the FDA's November 2007 release of their ongoing safety review for this drug, they have published a Public Health Advisory. Pfizer Drug, working with the FDA, changed their 'Medication Guide' for Chantix adding warnings to the label to include the possibility of severe changes in mood and behavior. These updates and changes help providers and patients to be alert for potentially harmful side-effects.

By the 4th quarter of 2007, Chantix accounted for more reports of serious drug adverse events in the United States than any other drug. The other highest ranked drugs (interferon beta, fentanyl, etanercept, etc) are all high alert drugs having benefits that are accompanied by substantial risks and are intended for serious illness in patients. In comparison, Chantix is intended for use in healthy people to help stop smoking.

Health care providers are strongly urged to consider:

- Before starting treatment ask the patient if s/he has ever had depression or other mental health issues
- Ask about other treatments s/he may be using to quit smoking (Chantix should not be used in conjunction with other cessation treatment)
- Ask the patient if, after starting Chantix treatment, s/he is experiencing new or worse mental health problems or any vivid, unusual, or strange dreams
- Discuss symptoms to report including anxiety, nervousness, tension, depressed mood, unusual behavior, and thinking about or attempting suicide
- Consider use of the PHQ2- two screening depression questions printed on the visit note as an extra vital sign. ("In the past 2 weeks have you felt down, depressed or hopeless? Have you had little pleasure in doing things?") Screen at every visit.

So far, four million prescriptions for Chantix have been written nationwide, which makes these psychiatric side effects seem minor. However, it is a concern that requires much more research and investigation. It necessitates all of us to be aware of these emerging complications and to continue to actively work with our patients to ensure we are providing high quality and safe health care.

To refer to complete articles cut and paste internet links:

<http://pn.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/43/5/23>
<http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/advisory/varenicline.htm>
<http://www.fda.gov/cder/Offices/ODS/MG/ChantixMG.pdf>
[http://www.law.uh.edu/healthlaw/perspectives/2008/\(AK\)%20Chantix.pdf](http://www.law.uh.edu/healthlaw/perspectives/2008/(AK)%20Chantix.pdf)
<http://www.ismp.org/docs/vareniclinestudy.asp>

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Newsletter Spotlight

Tobacco Cessation Program Manuals have been distributed to all Community Health Centers. Contact Sarah at sdixongale@ianepca.com

if you have any questions.

The 2008 Tobacco Cessation Guidelines are now available for download at:

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco>

Please update your manuals which currently have the 2007 Guidelines.

Awesome News

United Community Health Center takes the lead for the most increase in new patients! Might it be a direct correlation to the tobacco cessation program flyers inserted last month in payroll checks at a local poultry processor??

Great news from Linn County! Ingrid Mc Hugh reports they are close to having a new permanent location, since the flood devastation. They are closing in on a "go-live" date for starting the program.

Questions OR Comments? E-mail us at: sdixongale@ianepca.com or
kburgener@ianepca.com OR Call 515-244-9610 and ask for Sarah or Kate.