

DRUGS, BUPRENORPHINE, NATIONAL DOSE GUIDELINE

1311. Hon Barry House to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Health

Further to question on notice No. 1276 referring to the use of buprenorphine to treat narcotic addicts -

Is it a fact that the national dose guideline is five days?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

Yes, the National Guidelines state that anyone missing five days must be reviewed by their prescriber.

As stated in the response to PQ No. 1276, the Western Australian policy on missed doses is determined by the number of doses missed rather than the number of missed days. This policy approach has been adopted to take into account the long acting nature of buprenorphine that enables some patients to be dosed every second or third day.

There are three different dosing regimes that may be applied with different patients depending on need. These are;

1. Daily Dosing - Buprenorphine is administered daily.
2. Every Second Day Dosing - Buprenorphine is administered every second day.
3. Every Third day Dosing - Buprenorphine is administered every third day.

1. Daily Dosing

If a patient whose treatment regime involves daily dosing misses two doses, they must be reviewed on their return to treatment. This in effect would be on the third day, or later, after the last dose.

2. Every Second Day Dosing

If a patient whose treatment regime involves second day dosing misses two doses, they must be reviewed on their return to treatment. This in effect would be on the fifth day, or later, after the last dose.

3. Every Third Day Dosing

If a patient whose treatment regime involves third day dosing misses two doses, they must be reviewed on their return to treatment. This in effect would be on the seventh day, or later, after the last dose.

A patient who is not complying with their treatment plan by missing doses needs to be reviewed by their doctor to ensure that the dose being prescribed is safe and therapeutic. In some cases the dose may need to be increased, in others a reduction will be appropriate.

The Western Australian Guidelines (August 2003) state that patients who have missed two doses of buprenorphine should be considered for review by their prescribing doctor prior to receiving a further dose. This review may be conducted through a phone consultation between the dispensing pharmacist and the prescriber. Where the prescriber cannot be contacted, the dispenser may seek advice from the Clinical Advisory Service (CAS). CAS is able to authorise an appropriate dose of buprenorphine until such time as the prescriber can review the patient. This process aims to ensure patient safety. In all cases were a patient has not had buprenorphine for 5 day the patient should be reviewed in person by their prescribing doctor.