NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Community Pharmacy Script

Friday 7th November 2025

No: 23

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Let's focus on . . .

Diabetes

14th November is **World Diabetes Day**. Let's focus on Diabetes and encourage our patients to manage the condition as best they can.

Types of Diabetes

Type 1 – Often diagnosed in childhood, but can occur at any age. Type 1 cannot be prevented.

Type 2 – Some people are at higher risk due to ethnicity, age, living with obesity or being overweight. Type 2 can sometimes be prevented or stopped with lifestyle changes and treatment.

Common symptoms of diabetes

- Feeling thirsty all the time
- Peeing more than usual
- Feeling very tired
- Losing weight without trying

Long term complications of diabetes

Complications can develop over time and are linked to blood glucose levels. Managing blood glucose levels well and keeping to target levels can lower chances of getting complications. Having diabetes can increase the chance of getting other health problems, including:

- Heart attack and stroke
- Kidney problems
- Sensation damage and foot problems – diabetes can cause damage to nerves in these areas
- Sight problems – adults and children aged 12+ will be offered diabetic eye screening every 1 to 2 years
- Gum disease

How to help patients

Patients on insulin and sulfyonlureas should regularly check blood glucose levels.

Encourage patients to attend annual reviews including eye screening and to report any signs of complications to their GP. Check patients are regularly checking their blood glucose levels if required and are regularly ordering test strips and lancets or monitoring kits such as Freestyle

This Weeks Key Messages

The Great British Bone Check

Broken bones cause more than just pain – they impact careers, threaten independence, and can even lead to permanent disability. The Royal Osteoporosis Society is launching The Great British Bone Check, a national campaign to get everyone talking about bone health. It's a free online tool that helps people to assess their bones in a matter of minutes, helping to spot osteoporosis risk factors early and meaning that action can be taken if necessary, such as simple lifestyle changes.

Patients can head to https://thegreatbritishbonecheck.org.uk/ to find out more and check their osteoporosis risk in under three minutes.

Simulation Sessions 2026

As part of continuing education and development for our established community pharmacy independent prescribers, we are planning to host a series of simulation sessions. For those of you who are not familiar with the concept of simulation, it is a technique of safely replicating 'real life' skills, drills, and experiences in an effort to realistically rehearse and train in an environment that is safe for both patients and learners. This concept has been used across a variety of healthcare settings for several years as part of clinical training to provide a safe and controlled learning environment where clinicians can make prescribing decisions and learn in real time without compromising patient safety.

The aim of our sessions is to create a supportive learning opportunity in an entirely safe and confidential space to enhance our legacy community pharmacy prescribers' confidence and skills in delivering Pharmacy First Plus. The added bonus is a network opportunity to get to know other community pharmacy prescribers within A&A!

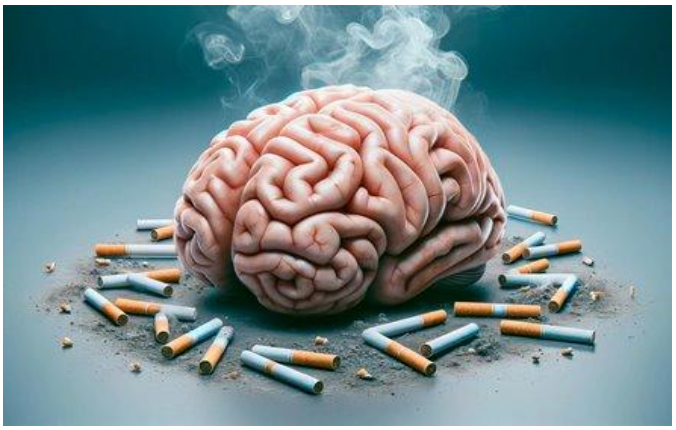
If you are interested in attending, please email **aa.cpteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk**

Cessation Corner #16

NHS Ayrshire & Arran

I'm Kerry Ingram and I work for Quit Your Way (QYW) in Ayrshire. QYW Helpline 0800 783 9132. Over the next few issues, I'll be writing about all things smoking-related, with the aim of helping you better support your smoking cessation patients. If you have any questions, please contact me directly: Kerry.Ingram@aapct.scot.nhs.uk

Mental Health & Smoking

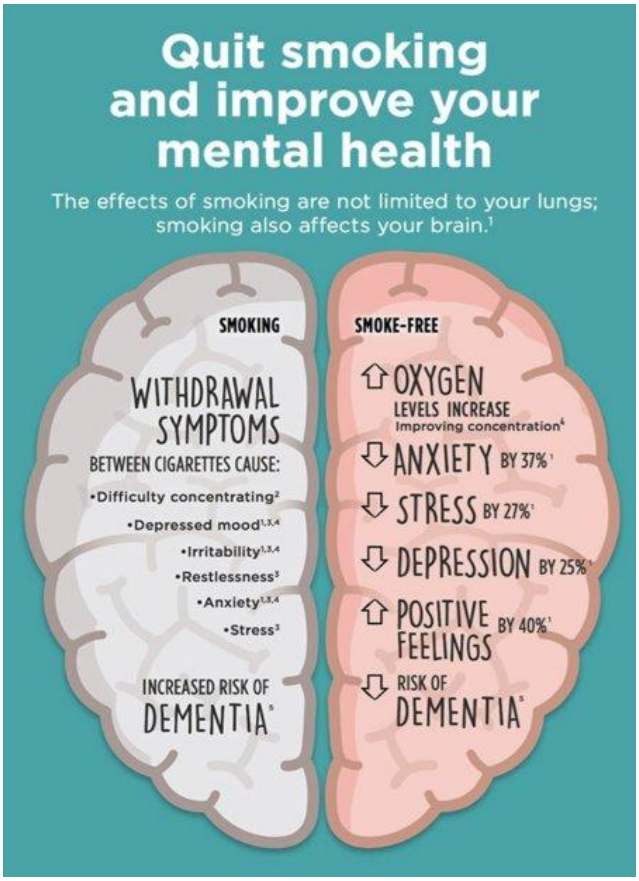


About 1 in 3 people with mental health issues smoke, compared to 1 in 6 of the population who don't. They also tend to smoke more, on average, per day and die 10-20 years earlier than the general population. Approximately 25% of the population of Ayrshire have some form of mental health issue and about two-thirds of these people smoke.

Smoking affects the way certain psychotropic medicines work in the human body. Tobacco smoke stimulates an enzyme in the liver which breaks down medication in the blood stream more quickly than in a non-smoker.

Meaning...

Sometimes people experience worse side-effects from medicines they take because they have to increase the dose due to their smoking. If they stopped smoking, they should reduce their medicine dose and any side-effects experienced should be lessened.



102 studies with 170,000 people who stopped smoking at least 6 weeks found

Why do people think that smoking can help with their mental health and the TRUTH about why it does the exact opposite?

Self-Medication Hypothesis

Many individuals say that smoking helps them manage symptoms such as: Anxiety, Depression, Poor concentration, Stress

Nicotine can temporarily alter mood and cognitive function, which may feel like relief from distressing symptoms. However, this is short-lived and reinforces dependence.

Higher Nicotine Dependence

People with mental ill-health often: Smoke more cigarettes per day, Have stronger cravings, Experience more severe withdrawal symptoms

This leads to higher rates of nicotine dependence—2 to 3 times greater than the general population.

Environmental and Cultural Factors

In many situations, smoking is still normalized in communities, by staff, by patients. There are misconceptions among healthcare providers that they are less motivated to quit. There can be fewer tailored interventions in mental health settings

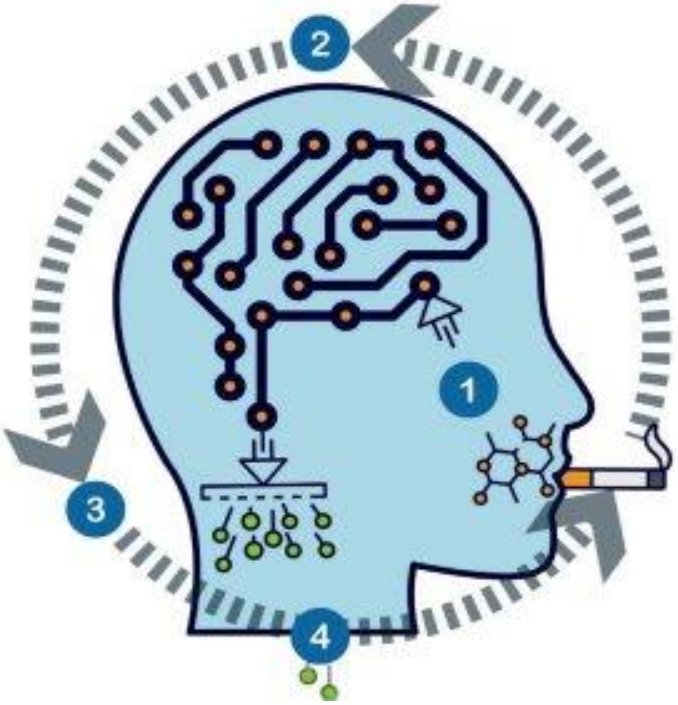
These all lead to fewer opportunities to access support to quit smoking.

Co-occurring Substance Use Disorders

There's a strong link between smoking and other substance use. People in addiction treatment programs often have smoking rates between 65–85%.

Alas sometimes stopping smoking is seen as less important that other addictions.

Development of nicotine dependence



1. Nicotine, from smoking, delivered to the brain.
2. Nicotine receptors cause the release of Dopamine.
3. Dopamine is released leading to feelings of calm and reward.
4. Dopamine levels reduce, causing withdrawal symptoms of stress & anxiety, which triggers the want for another cigarette.

Both NRT and Varenicline can be used for smoking cessation in patients who have mental ill-health. Both are effective in this patient cohort. If you sign someone up who is taking psychotropic medicines then you may have to reduce or increase their dose of these medicines, when the patient stops smoking.

If there are specific topics, you'd like me to cover in future issues, please drop me an email at Kerry.Ingram@aapct.scot.nhs.uk Thanks.

RECENT COMMUNICATIONS SUMMARY

Friday 24th October – aa.cpteam – Drug Alert 45 Class 3 Action within 5 Days Accord Healthcare Ltd Ipratropium Bromide 500mcg/2ml Nebuliser Solution

Monday 27th – Kirstie Church - Subject: Improving Safety in HRT Prescribing – Community Pharmacy Involvement

Tuesday 28th October – aa.cpteam – Drug Alert 46 Class 2 Action Within 48 Hours Baxter Healthcare Ltd Compound Sodium Lactate Solution For Infusion Bp (Hartmann's Solution For Infusion) In Viaflo 1000ml

Thursday 30th October – ClinicalPCT - PCA2025-P-23 Extension to serious shortage protocols for Cefalexin Oral Suspension Sugar Free Products

Monday 3rd November – Clinical PCT - PCA2025-(P)-24 Community Pharmacy Services Amendments To Pharmacy First Remuneration Model and Introduction of Pharmacy First Plus Activity Pot

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