Healthcare Improvement Scotland

SCOTTISH PATIENT SAFETY PROGRAMME

# Learning Summary
## NHS Western Isles

The goal of the project was to reduce the total number of acute prescriptions issued for oral contraceptives each month by GP practices in NHS Western Isles.

## Background

NHS Western Isles has a population of approximately 27,000 patients across nine GP practices. The board has established a pharmacotherapy hub model in response to the challenges of delivering services in a remote and rural setting and to an ageing population.

## Key activities

As pharmacotherapy staff work off-site in the hub, **building relationships** was an important first step to facilitate this the board initially worked with one practice, which accounts for approximately 30% of the total population.

Working with the practice, the pharmacotherapy team carried out **data analysis** on repeat acute prescriptions. They identified that requests for **oral contraceptives** made up a significant part of the acute prescribing workload.

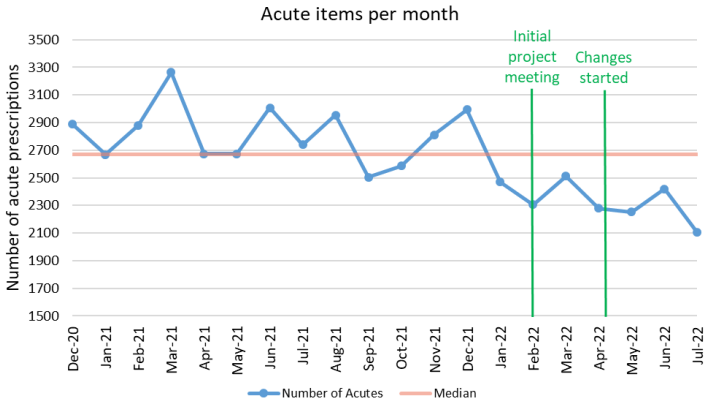
The team focused on an initial change idea of switching combined oral contraceptives from acute to repeat prescriptions. To help achieve this they:

- **built engagement** with all practice staff
- applied **clinical coding in the recall diary** to identify patients on combined oral contraceptives so they receive an annual review, and
- moved combined oral contraceptives for suitable patients from acute prescriptions to 12 month **repeat prescriptions**.

To complete annual reviews the practice use an e-consult form or paper alternative. Patients now complete the form and provide their Body Mass Index (BMI) and blood pressure for the practice nurse to review.

## Impact and learning

- The team are using Scottish Therapeutic Utility (STU) data to **measure improvement**.
- The monthly number of acute prescriptions issued by the practice shows signs of **starting to reduce** with expected fluctuations in the summer due to temporary residents.




- Patients have fed back that they feel more in control of managing their contraception by having **easier access to their medication**.
- The process for prescribing combined oral contraceptives is more efficient and the recall system more robust which supports patient safety.

The team are also tracking repeat acute prescriptions for combined oral contraceptives prescriptions over a year so all suitable patients can be moved to repeat prescriptions.

## Next steps

- The pharmacotherapy team have started working with their other practices to further test the changes.
- The team plan to **introduce a similar process** for dealing with acute prescriptions for Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) medications.

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