



Welcome to the VIP Initiative

November 2019

An IDEAS –VISN 19 Service and Research Collaborative

RESEARCH NEWS

LOPERAMIDE ABUSE

"THE POOR MAN'S METHADONE"

By Ashley Tran

Ashley Tran is currently a 4th year pharmacy student at the University of Utah, College of Pharmacy. Originally from California, she came out to Utah to learn more about the different roles pharmacists could have throughout the Utah healthcare system and challenge herself to work closely with a diverse population of patients. She is currently on rotation at the VASLCHCS VIP-PACT with Natalie Valentino, PharmD, BCPP and Amy Butz, PharmD, BCPP. Having never worked with veterans in a primary care setting, Ashley finds every patient encounter especially engaging and extremely rewarding. She plans to continue her education by pursuing a residency after completing pharmacy school. After working with the VIP team, mental health/substance abuse is something she is considering pursuing further.

One of the VIP primary care providers brought up loperamide abuse and requested more information about this topic. Preliminary search resulted in several news articles about the recent increase of loperamide use to “get high”. The prevalence of this misuse was significant enough that the FDA approved package limitations for the over-the-counter (OTC) brand-name of loperamide (Imodium) in September 2019. Further research resulted in numerous case reports and reviews of loperamide abuse over the past decade. These articles frequently noted cardiotoxicity, in addition to the expected respiratory depression, associated with excessive doses of loperamide. Unfortunately, there is no central reporting of overdose cases, making it difficult to quantify its frequency. As more reports and reviews are published, a better understanding of the management of abuse could be accomplished.”

To access a full report, please click [here](#)

VHA NOTICE 2019-18

BUPRENORPHINE PRESCRIBING FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER

VHA NOTICE 2019-18 MEMO

By direction of the Office of the Under Secretary for Health, the purpose of this Veterans Health Administration (VHA) notice is to call for immediate action within every Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) and VA medical facility to increase access to and remove barriers to prescribing medications for treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD). The national opioid epidemic represents one of the leading preventable causes of morbidity and premature death in the United States. Veterans treated in VHA die of drug overdose at almost twice the national rate of the general population. Medication for OUD, commonly referred to as medication assisted treatment, reduces the risk of overdose and all-cause mortality and is strongly recommended as first-line treatment by VA-DoD Clinical Practice Guidelines, but it is not universally offered within VHA points of care outside of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment programs. To access a full memo please click [here](#).

PUBLICATION

[Associations Between the Specialty of Opioid Prescribers and Opioid Addiction, Misuse, and Overdose Outcomes.](#)

Lobo CP, Cochran G, Chang CH, Gellad WF, **Gordon AJ**, Jalal H, Lo-Ciganic WH, Karp JF, Kelley D, Donohue JM. Pain Med. 2019 Oct 18. pii: pnz234. doi: 10.1093/pm/pnz234. [Epub ahead of print]. PMID:31626295

DECEMBER 2019 VIP CHAT

Please announce to your networks our 30 minute, virtual VIP chat on Wednesday, December 18th, 2019, noon-1 PM MST: “*The case of Tom: My patient is on Buprenorphine/Naloxone and needs a surgery—what do I need to do?*” If you have a question you would like addressed, please submit it to Nodira.Codell@va.gov.

For resources, guidances, past newsletters and presentations, visit our VIP SharePoint site: www.tinyurl.com/vip-initiative