

The Prescribing Corner: A case study

Kevin is a new patient at the walk-in clinic. He is a 33-year old mechanic who moved to Alberta for work. He has chronic low back pain following a disc injury requiring L4/5 fusion in 1998. He is using Percocet 2 to 3 tablets q4hr prn to allow him to work. He is requesting refills.

What do you need to know before you prescribe?

1. Make a diagnosis with an appropriate differential.
2. Psychological assessment including risk of addictive disorders – ask about family history and personal history of substance abuse, mental health history and history of sexual abuse.
3. Medication history – Get a patient medication profile from the Triplicate Prescription Program by calling **780-423-4764** or **1-800-561-3899 ext. 4764**. Consider looking at **PIN data on Alberta Netcare**, which includes medications not included in the TPP program (such as benzodiazepines and codeine-containing medications).

Get the clinical information you require before you begin to prescribe. It is acceptable to decline a prescription or to provide a small quantity until more information is available to you.

Reference: Universal Precautions in Pain Medicine, Dr. Douglas Gourlay (2005)

Feedback and comments? Please contact Dr. Susan Ulan, Senior Medical Advisor at 780-969-4930, 1-800-561-3899 ext. 4930 (in Alberta), or sulan@cpsa.ab.ca.



Prescribing CORNER

The Prescribing Corner is a new feature column for physicians.

It is an extension of the recently launched Physician Prescribing Practices Program or P4, providing resources on prescription related issues and offering the opportunity for two-way dialogue between physicians and College staff.

Our first column features a case study involving a new patient requesting refills for an opioid prescription. Future columns will include other case studies, tips and information about prescribing practices, and the opportunity for physicians to suggest topics, information, practice concerns and other information related to their own prescribing experiences and practices.

We hope you find the Prescribing Corner column helpful and we look forward to your feedback and comments.

Alberta Human Rights Commission resources

The Alberta Human Rights Commission has launched three new quick-reference information sheets that complement the Commission's comprehensive interpretive bulletin *Obtaining and responding to medical information in the workplace*.

The bulletin and information sheets were developed in response to the many inquiries that the Commission receives about issues related to medical absences and an employee's medical ability to work.

Each information sheet is aimed at one of these target audiences: employers, employees, or doctors - who all play a role

in gathering and providing reasonable medical information about an employee's disability.

Obtaining and responding to medical information in the workplace will assist physicians as they respond to requests from patients for medical information in the workplace.

A *Sample Medical Absence Form* and a *Sample Medical Ability to Work Form* targets physicians and may be used to provide employers and employees with the necessary medical information for the workplace. The sample medical forms were developed in consultation with the

College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta, the Alberta Medical Association, Alberta Federation of Labour, and the Alberta Workers' Health Centre.

The Commission anticipates that these resources will help employers, employees, and physicians achieve good communication and effective workplace accommodations for employees.

For more information and to link to the resources visit: www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/employment/employee_info/accommodation/obtaining_med_info_employees.asp.

*Alberta Human Rights Commission
resources cont'd Pg. 10...*