

Barbara Melrose - Project Mgr.

From: Lesley Humphrey-Quality Manage
To: Ian Reid-Medical Director
Cc: Barbara Melrose - Project Mgr.; Eileen Thomas-Nursing Director; Max Millett - Chief Executive
Subject: Prescribing opiates in community hosps
Date: 29 October 1999 09:57

Ian, I've had a long conversation with Jane Barton today, in response to the comment made by Dr Turner (review of Wilson complaint) - the practice of writing up s/c pump morphine with dosages ranging from 20-200 mgs per day - ? poor practice, ? lead to serious problems.

Jane feels very vulnerable and that the nurses are also vulnerable - but that the system of medical cover makes it difficult to prescribe otherwise. If we say she can't prescribe like this, does she refuse to prescribe opiates, as she can't be expected to attend the wards at the drop of a hat?

She feels very unsupported on clinical risk matters such as this, to the extent of wondering if the job is worth it. She wasn't directly threatening to leave, but was making a plea from the heart about how it feels just now. I told her of our concerns about the harassment clinicians seem to be facing from some complainants.

She asked if we could take a Trust stance on the prescribing of opiates in community hosps. My comment was that I thought this was an important clinical governance issue, a real issue to be recognised and tackled; far more important than sterile tick box risk assessment.

This is our first opportunity to link a complaint into clinical governance - for positive action!

* Where do we take this? Obviously MAC, I guess, but perhaps also to the CGP? and/or RMG?

Lesley