

Improving prescribing confidence for varenicline

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Introduction

- **Smoking cessation is a key Scottish Government Local Development Plan (LDP) target.**
- **Community pharmacy supports the majority of smoking cessation quit attempts in Scotland.**
- **Since June 2014 varenicline has been offered as pharmacotherapy under Patient Group Direction (PGD)**

Introduction

- **Varenicline delivers 3 month quit rates at 38%, higher than any other pharmacotherapy**
- **Prescribing of varenicline in Scotland in 2015/16 was low in comparison to England: 11% of quit attempts compared to 25%. In NHSGGC this figure was even lower at 7%**
- **Anecdotal reports suggested a lack of community pharmacist confidence prescribing varenicline with concerns about side effects and Black Triangle status**

Aim

To provide peer assisted learning increasing the confidence of community pharmacists to prescribe varenicline under PGD optimally supporting smoking cessation attempts.

Training 1

**NHSGGC Pharmacy Public Health
Smokefree team developed a training
event focused on addressing
community pharmacists' concerns
around prescribing varenicline under
PGD.**

Training 2

Training covered

- **Current prescribing of varenicline in NHSGGC**
- **Varenicline pharmacology and efficacy**
- **The newly reviewed NHSGGC varenicline PGD, highlighting key changes**

Training 3

Training covered

- **EAGLE study results, safety and efficacy particularly in individuals with mental health problems**
- **A peer panel session led by experienced community pharmacists regularly prescribing varenicline**

Training – 'Peer panel'



Method

- **The training event was run on four occasions (two evening and two half day sessions) between June 2016 and February 2017.**
- **Post course evaluation of confidence to prescribe varenicline was undertaken at all four events by questionnaire**

Results 1

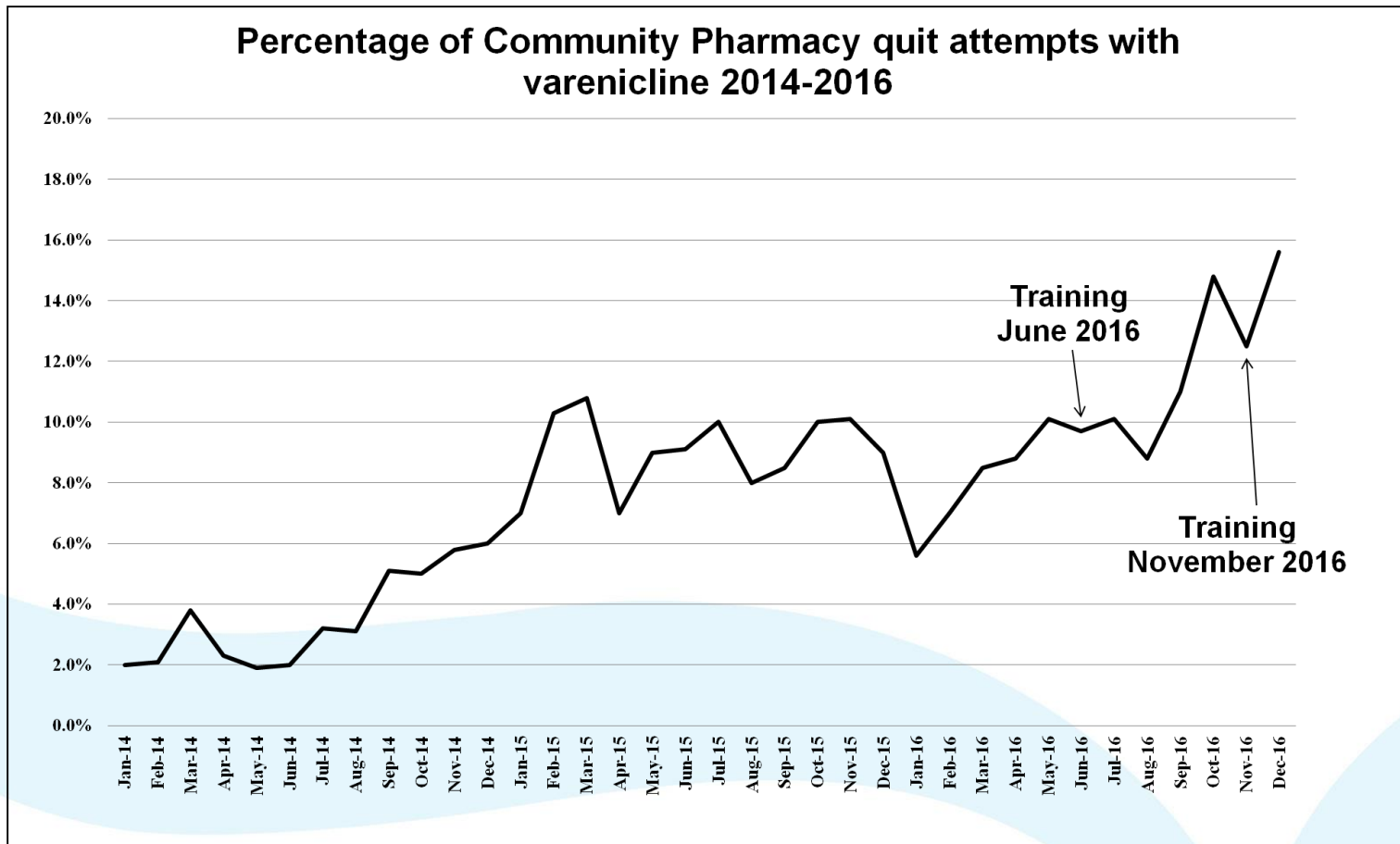
- **87 pharmacists and 13 pre-registration pharmacists attended the four events.**
- **Evaluation from 94 participants was extremely positive with 78 (83%) reporting increased confidence to prescribe varenicline.**
- **The most highly valued section of the training was the opportunity to discuss varenicline prescribing with community pharmacist peers.**

Results 2

**Varenicline prescribing in NHSGGC
increased to 15.6% by December 2016.**

**Figure 1. Percentage of Community quit
attempts with varenicline 2014-2016**

Results 3



Conclusion

- **A training event which included peer assisted learning was well evaluated by community pharmacists, who stated that it improved their confidence in prescribing varenicline.**
- **A contemporaneous increase of varenicline prescribing was demonstrated in NHSGGC community pharmacies.**

Latest Updates

- Varenicline prescribing in NHSGGC 20%
- 93% of NHSGGC pharmacies have a varenicline trained pharmacist
- Training delivered again October 2017

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