SCREENING SPECIAL POPULATIONS for Prescription Opioid Misuse

You should screen all patients for substance use with a validated screening tool. Getting a complete picture of a patient’s risk involves more than just screening...

1. Know your patients

   - **(✓)** Assess for "Total Pain"
     Understanding how a patient is experiencing pain in many forms, including physical and emotional, will give you a more complete picture of their risk for opioid misuse.
   
   - **(✓)** Take social and sexual histories
     As part of your screening and patient triage, you should take a detailed and inclusive, social, and sexual history. This can help you gather important health between information, as well as ascertain whether your patient identifies as part of certain higher-risk communities.
   
   - **(✓)** Check for co-occurring conditions
     Many conditions, like depression and anxiety, can greatly increase a patient's risk for substance use disorder, including prescription opioid misuse.
   
   - **(✓)** Check your biases
     Certain populations are often overlooked when it comes to substance abuse screening. For example, providers have historically considered opioid misuse to be a low priority in palliative medicine and hospice care. But opioid misuse can have a significant impact on quality of life, both during and after treatment for serious illness.

2. Know your tools*

   - **(✓)** Assess your own practice setting
     Screening may be done in every healthcare setting, but may look different in different practices. Established practices may have specific screening and assessment tools built into their protocols or if your practice does not consider suggesting it.
   
   - **(✓)** Learn the differences between tools
     Identify the tools that work best for unique circumstances. Different screening tools work best for various substance use, ages, ranges, and methods of administration.
   
   - **(✓)** Go beyond "screening" tools
     Utilize other tools that might give you information not included in screenings:
     - Check for a state’s prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP); ensure a patient has any current or prior prescriptions for medications that might impact your treatment plan.
     - Drug and alcohol tests can be used to identify the use of specific substances that may inform a patient’s risk of misuse.

3. Tailor your approach

   - **(✓)** Pick the most appropriate tools
     Once you have familiarized yourself with different screening tools, choose the one that will be most appropriate for your practice setting and patient. It may not be the same each time.
   
   - **(✓)** Establish trust
     Patients from many populations may have a distrust of medical establishments. Remember the importance of building trust with your patient to ensure they communicate fully and openly. It is vital that your patients feel comfortable, respected, and supported in these situations.
   
   - **(✓)** Consider confidentiality
     Statistically, patients are less likely to be open to medical management when they perceive that healthcare services are not confidential. Make sure they understand the limits of provider-patient confidentiality and how you plan to involve parents or caregivers. State laws may apply.

4. Prepare for next steps

   - **(✓)** Confirm treatment services in your area.
   
   - **(✓)** Consider inpatient or help with pain management in certain situations.
   
   - **(✓)** Check for OUD treatment services in your area.
   
   - **(✓)** Offer alternatives to opioids for patients who may be at higher risk for misuse.
   
   - **(✓)** Continue to follow up with patients throughout treatment.

Remember: Screening does not yield a formal diagnosis!

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*This slide provides important health information and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always consult your healthcare provider before making any changes to your health regimen.*