

Medicines Use Review

What it is:

Medicines Use Review (MUR) is a service which can be offered to patients by community pharmacists as an Advanced Service within the Pharmacy Contractual Framework.

The aim of the Service is to achieve a concordant approach to medicine taking by:

- establishing the patient's actual use, understanding and experience of taking their medicines;
- identifying, discussing and resolving poor or ineffective use of their medicines;
- identifying side effects and drug interactions that may affect patient compliance;
- improving the clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness of prescribed medicines and reducing medicine wastage.

What it is not:

- a clinical medication review;
- a discussion about changes to drug treatment;
- a discussion about a medical condition beyond its drug treatment;
- a discussion about the effectiveness of treatment based on test results.

Who can deliver the service?

The MUR can only be offered by accredited pharmacists from accredited premises. Whilst an MUR could be performed in a patient's home or even a local practice room, the review will normally be conducted in an appropriate consultation area within the pharmacy. The pharmacy will receive a fee for the service which is nationally agreed and funded through reductions in the Drug Tariff prices of some medicines which has produced budgetary savings.

What does it involve?

As this is a concordance based review, the pharmacist will ask the patient to bring their medication (including purchased medicines) with them to the review. Discussions with the patient may include:

- what the patient thinks each medicine is for and when and how they take it;
- how compliant they are with prescribed instructions;
- how and when they take medication labelled as *required* or as *directed*;
- advice on tolerability and perceived side effects;
- dealing with practical problems in ordering, obtaining, taking and using medicines;
- identification of unwanted medicines - patient is no longer taking the medicines;
- identification of a potential change of dosage form to facilitate effective usage;
- proposals for dose or strength optimisation - provided it does not impact on the patient's clinical management;

The review will be recorded on a national standard form. A copy will be retained in the pharmacy, a copy given to the patient and a copy sent to the GP. There may be action points for all parties dependant on the outcomes of the review.

Who can have an MUR?

An MUR can be delivered when a patient with multiple medicines and/or long-term conditions receives a consultation planned in line with locally agreed protocols. It can also be initiated as a *Prescription Intervention* in response to an identified significant problem around dispensing where there is a need to develop the patient's understanding of their medicine to improve its use and more than simple advice is required.

With a planned MUR, the patient would normally have been using the pharmacy for their prescriptions for the previous three months and only receive an MUR every 12 months unless their medication changes significantly. From October 1st 2006, each pharmacy can perform up to a maximum of 400 MUR consultations per year.

Benefits to Patients

Improving a patient's understanding of their condition and treatment should:

- improve compliance with prescribed medication;
- improve health outcomes;
- improve quality of life;
- increase ownership of condition and treatment;
- encourage self-care.

Benefits to Community Pharmacists

The opportunity to increase the active participation in the patient care pathway will:

- improve patient health outcomes;
- improve patient loyalty;
- improve satisfaction with their professional role;
- improve collaborative working with other healthcare professionals.

Benefits to GPs

50% of patients do not comply with some element of their prescribed treatment, a large proportion of GP appointments are taken by patients with long-term conditions and over half of hospital re-admissions in the elderly are a direct result of poor compliance with prescribed medication. Improving a patient's concordance and compliance with their treatment should improve their health outcomes thus reducing workload for GPs and unnecessary secondary care admissions.

A critical element to the success of MURs is effective face to face communication between GP and Pharmacy practices - developing relationships, reaching a mutual understanding of protocols, parameters and preferred target patient groups including coordinating MUR timing with GP practice medication reviews to maximise the beneficial outcomes.

Benefits to Commissioners

Improving patient care is at the heart of all drivers within the NHS. Compliance with appropriately prescribed treatment is fundamental to ensuring that the final outcomes of that care are realised. Non-compliance can lead to:

- non-achievement of health improvement goals;
- unnecessary increased workload for healthcare professionals;
- increased secondary care admissions;
- poor use of NHS resources;

Medicines Use Reviews conducted by community pharmacists can play an important role in achieving all stakeholder goals. It does not matter how clinically appropriate prescribed treatment is if the patient does not understand and follow the recommended regimen.