

Pattern of PRN Use of Medication to Manage Disturbed Behaviour in a CAMHS Inpatient Unit: A Twelve-Month Quantitative Analysis

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Abstract:

The CAMHS inpatient unit caters for young people between 12 – 17 years of age with severe mental health problems and who pose a significant level of risk that cannot be managed in the community. Due to the complex nature of these patients' presentations, staff are required to use prn medication (pro re nata, Latin abbreviation for 'when required') to manage agitation and disturbed behaviour when all other non-pharmacological de-escalation measures fail.

While there are evidence-based benefits to using prn medication (Oral or intramuscular - IM) to alleviate acute distress, there are also risks and potentially harmful side effects which clinicians must bear in mind before their administration in young people. It is therefore important to assess the pattern of use of prn medication to ensure that clinicians are adhering to established service protocols and that medication is only used when absolutely necessary and appropriate. Furthermore, assessing the pattern of prn medication use is essential for informing quality improvement initiatives within the service.