Improving Management of Long Term Health Conditions of Adults with Learning Disabilities in Lothian

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Aims
For adults with learning disabilities (ALD) in Lothian:
• To identify the prevalence of long term health conditions
• To raise awareness of their specific health needs
• To improve the quality of long term condition review in Primary Care.

Background – Health of adults with learning disabilities (ALD)
The long term health outcomes of ALD are poorer than the general population.
ALD are more likely to die on average 20 years earlier than the general population.
Conditions may go unrecognised due to diagnostic overshadowing, or lack of awareness by professionals or carers of their different and increased health needs.

Method
Through a Scottish Enhanced Service Programme, GP practices were asked to identify the prevalence of 11 long term QOF conditions within their registered populations of ALD over 3 years.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALD in Lothian total practices</td>
<td>2011 - 12</td>
<td>2012 - 13</td>
<td>2013 - 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4152</td>
<td>4351</td>
<td>4233</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lothian LD prevalence</td>
<td>Scottish LD prevalence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0.48%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total practices submitting data</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of patients in data set</td>
<td>3584</td>
<td>4119</td>
<td>4023</td>
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Results
• There were significant differences in prevalence for ALD compared to the general population.
• Some conditions were significantly more common in the ALD population.
• High co-existence of at least 1 other long term condition:
  - Epilepsy and mental health issues
  - Asthma and diabetes and hypothyroidism
  - COPD & CHD less common
• No QOF long term conditions were unrepresented.

These results are consistent with the limited published UK data on the co-morbidity of ALD.

Conclusions
The data collection over 3 years:
• Raised awareness of the health needs of people with learning disabilities and prevalence of long term conditions within primary care.
• Encouraged practices to offer longer appointment times for reviews and to involve key family and carers in health care planning and treatment.

The enhanced service also resulted in:
• Production of Accessible QOF review invitation letters which are widely used throughout Lothian Primary Care.
• Development of online resource pack to support use of accessible information, signage and community links.
• Learning Disability training was offered to all Lothian GP practices on the health profile of people with learning disabilities, how to improve communication and reduce barriers to healthcare.

The Future
This large dataset of people with learning disabilities, their long term conditions and geographical distribution throughout Lothian will provide effective service delivery, and will ensure training and resources are tailored to meet their health care needs within local communities.

The next steps are to encourage General Practices to increase usage of accessible letters and information to ensure person-centred care is provided for people with learning disabilities.

References
With thanks to General Practice staff involved in the Enhanced Service Data Collection.