Academic Detailing: A Bright Spot in Improving Opioid Prescribing in VA

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What is the Goal of Academic Detailing (AD)?

"To close the gap between the best available science and actual prescribing practice, so that each prescription is based only on the most current and accurate evidence about efficacy, safety, and cost-effectiveness."

-Dr. Jerry Avorn

Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School
Chief of the Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and
Pharmacoeconomics in the Department of Medicine
at Brigham and Women's Hospital

What is Academic Detailing?

- **In-person** educational outreach visits between a highly-trained clinical pharmacist and a prescribing provider
- **Interactive**, so the academic detailer can:
  - **Understand** the provider's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior, which influence personal motivations for their practice
  - **Modify** the interaction to meet the needs of the provider
  - **Engage** the provider by learning together rather than teaching
- Uses balanced evidence-based information and tools
- Over **time**, the Academic Detailing Pharmacist and provider develop a trusted and useful **relationship**

What it is NOT?

- Memos or brochures sent through the mail
- Lectures delivered in the provider's office
- Focused on formulary compliance
- Solely about cost reduction
- Merely an attempt to undo "Big Pharma" marketing
- "Counter-detailing"

Where is Academic Detailing Being Used?

- State-Based Programs in CA, CT, ID, MA, ME, NY, OR, SC, and VT

- Kaiser Permanente and other large healthcare systems

- Internationally in Australia, Canada, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom

Implementation of Academic Detailing in VA

- VA Interim Under Secretary for Health authorized Academic Detailing Programs in every Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN)

- One AD Clinical Pharmacy Specialist was hired at each KY and TN VA Medical Center and received specialized training

Does Academic Detailing Work?

- Does detailing work for the pharmaceutical industry?
- 25 years of Academic Detailing work reported in the literature
- Number of Outreach Visits, Repeat Visits, Time Spent at Each Visit, and Documentation of Visits *are* measures for Academic Detailing success (doing the work is the goal).
- We are seeing changes in provider behavior over time and performance metric improvement (long-term problems require long-term solutions).
- National VA data shows a difference in prescribing practices between those providers who have received Academic Detailing visits and those who have not.

Real World Outcomes in VA

Over the past three years, VA facilities in Kentucky and Tennessee have:

- Reduced the percentage of Veterans being prescribed opioids by 36%.
- Reduced the percentage of Veterans receiving a combination of opioids and benzodiazepines by 60%.
- Reduced the percentage of patients on high doses of opioids (doses greater than 100mg Morphine Equivalent Daily Dose, or MEDD) by 31%.
- Increased the use of urine drug screening in patients on long-term opioids by 65%.
- Distributed 7,480 naloxone rescue kits to Veterans
- Submitted VA controlled substance prescription data to the Tennessee and Kentucky Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs)
- Queried Tennessee and Kentucky PDMPs

Summary

- Changing provider behavior takes time
- Policy and prescribing guidelines help
- Academic Detailing is a valuable tool VA is using to improve evidenced-based prescribing practices
- Significant changes are possible