

More Than Meds

Pharmacists & Communities
Partnering for Better Mental Health

Featured Web Resources

A new website rolled across our screen this week that we couldn't help but get excited about. It's called the [Mental Elf](#) and it is an interesting site for information on mental health research, policy and other goodies. "No jargon, no misinformation, no spin, just what you need."

Case-based learning can be very valuable. The University of Toronto Medical School has developed an [e-Module](#) to assist clinicians in working with people with addictions. It explores addiction as a family disease and allows the user to navigate through a patient's history and family tree and provide learning opportunities along the way.

In The Know...

Smoking accounts for 17 in every 100 deaths in Canada. It's a leading cause of cancer, heart, and respiratory diseases. While the rate of smoking among Canadians has dropped in recent decades (now ~17%), the rate in people with mental illnesses such as mood, anxiety, psychotic, and substance use disorders is much higher. For example, in people with schizophrenia the rate is greater than 4 in 5, which is more than 4x that of the general population. Additionally, it's well documented that the prevalence of heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in people with serious mental illness, is approximately double that of the general population. The higher risk for heart disease along with the higher rate of smoking and its well known preventable morbidities and high mortality rate, make it clear that smoking cessation programs need to include these patients.

Do **pharmacists** make a difference in helping patients quit smoking? Absolutely! Studies show that through face-to-face counselling and follow-up, pharmacists can **more than double** a patient's chance of successfully quitting smoking, compared to standard care alone. Pharmacists also play an important role in identifying and managing risks associated with smoking cessation in patients stabilized on medications whose metabolism changes with smoking status. A 2010 review found doses of **clozapine** and **olanzapine** required a **30-40% reduction** to achieve pre-cessation plasma concentrations and prevent toxicity.

What about smoking cessation aids and medications? A recent Cochrane review examined the evidence for different smoking cessation therapies to help people with schizophrenia "kick the habit". Check out the summary at thementalelf.net or link directly to the [Cochrane Library](#) to get the details!

How can you do a smoking cessation program? There are supports available for pharmacists to improve their skills in counseling patients on the "ins and outs" of how to quit (e.g., [CE programs](#) similar to **CPhA's QUIT program**) Also check around your community for local resources for your patients like [Capital Health's Stop Smoking Service](#)

In The News

"Philanthropist surprises IWK Foundation with \$1M donation"

Marjorie Lindsay's \$1 million contribution to the IWK Health Centre will help fund the construction of a new inpatient mental health unit, due to open early in 2014.

Read the Article [here](#)

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