



Clozapine and Constipation:

A Quality Improvement project in 2gether NHS Trust

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1. The problem

Clozapine is a second-line antipsychotic drug used mainly in patients with treatment-resistant schizophrenia.

Constipation is a common side effect, affecting around 30% of patients on Clozapine.

This can lead to life threatening complications such as bowel obstruction, ileus or perforation in 0.3% of patients.

This is a side effect poorly recognised by healthcare professionals.

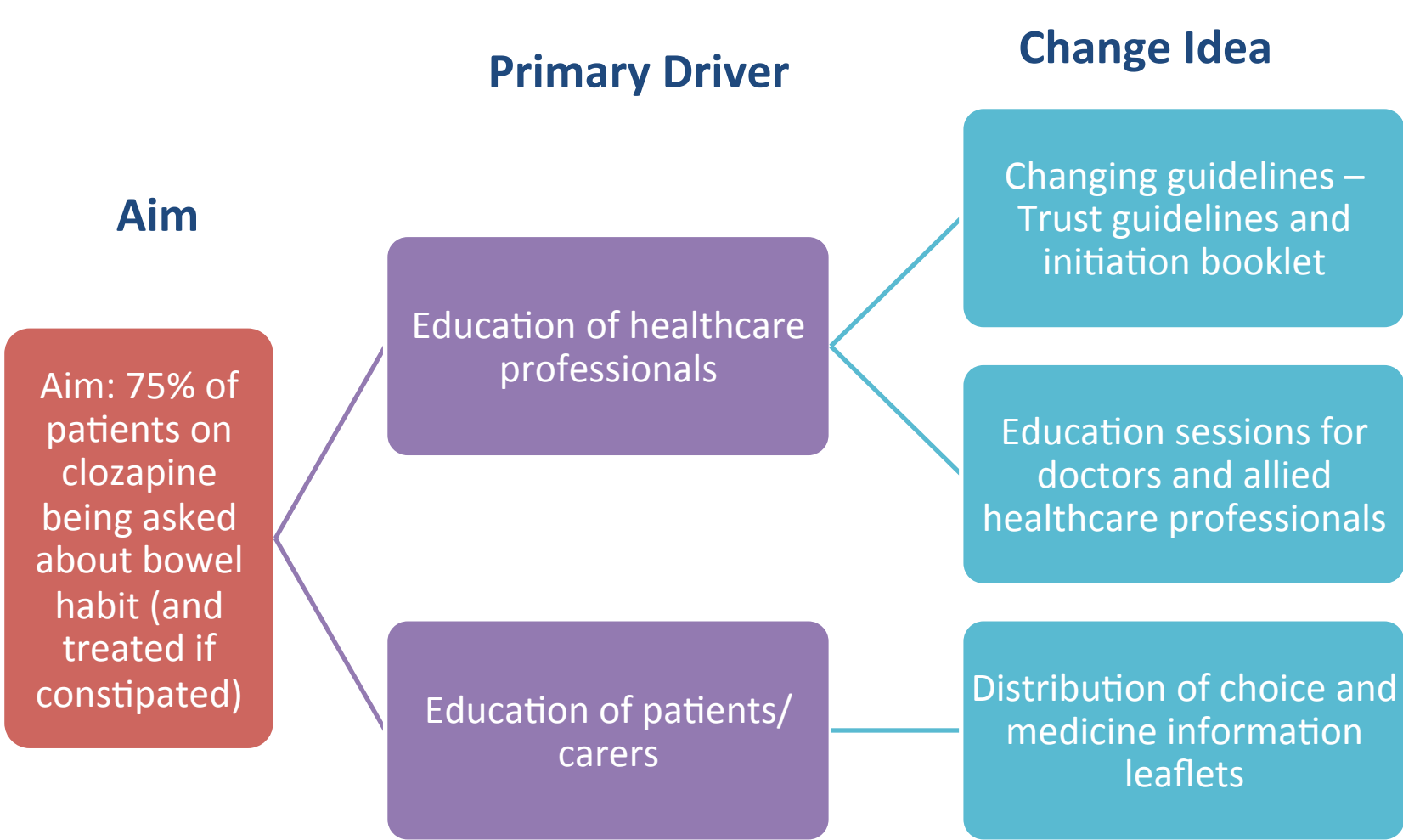
2. Initial Audit

We performed an audit of Rio (clinical notes) on all patients at the Gloucester Assertive Outreach team, from December 2016 – June 2017.

We read all of the clinical notes over this time period to see whether the patients had been asked about their bowel habit.

0/18 had been asked about their bowel habit. 2 had mentioned constipation of their own accord, of which 1 was redirected to their GP and 1 no further action was noted.

Aim: To have 75% of patients on Clozapine regularly being asked about their bowel habit by March 2018.



3. Implementing change

We worked alongside the Drug and Therapeutics committee to help **rewrite the Clozapine guidelines** and included a section on bowel habit monitoring.

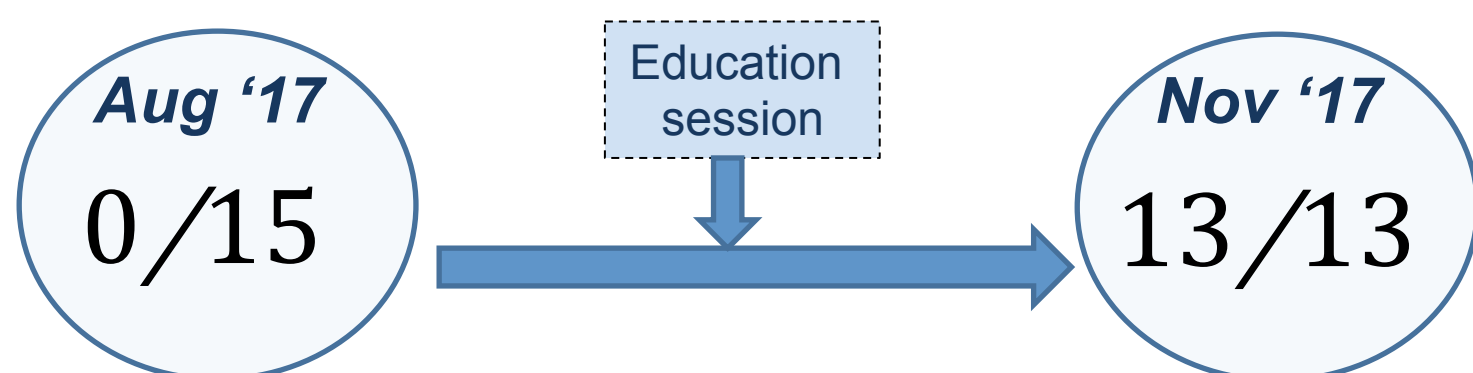
We liaised with pharmacy to **change the Clozapine initiation booklet** to include checkboxes for baseline bowel habit and consideration of laxative prescription.

We undertook a number of **staff education sessions**
 a) at the psychiatric doctors' meeting
 b) at the Gloucester Assertive Outreach team – engaging community doctors, care co-ordinators, pharmacists and mental health nurses.

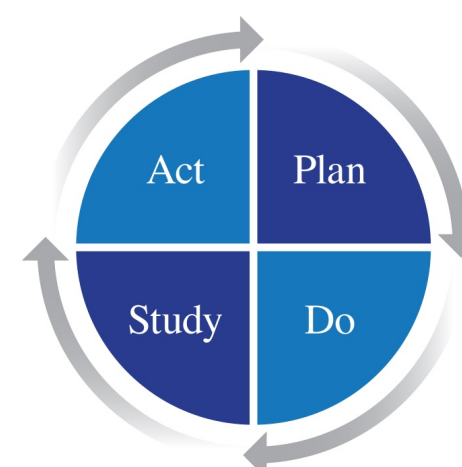
We have distributed the new **information leaflets** to the wards

4. Educating Junior Doctors

Are you aware that Clozapine affects your bowels?



A questionnaire presented to all junior doctors at their induction in August revealed that 0/15 had prior knowledge of Clozapine's effects on the bowels. We then performed a short presentation and then did a repeat questionnaire in 3 months. Here 13/13 doctors who responded were aware of constipation as a side effect and would change their practice as a result of the presentation.



5. Re-audit and follow-up

We will re-audit the number of patients at Gloucester AOT asked about their bowel habit 3 months after guideline publication (March 2018) to ascertain whether our project has led to improvement.

We will present our audit and findings to other community psychiatry teams to further raise awareness.