



# Controlled Drugs: Learning from Incidents

Partners in improving local health

July 2016

Issue 4

NECS supports the NHS England Area Team Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer in ensuring the safe management and use of controlled drugs within the North East & Cumbria region. Based on the commonly reported incidents and the lessons learned, we aim to share good practice across the region

## Prescribing for Temporary Residents

Prescribing for temporary residents can be an area for potential bogus requests for medicines. Below we share our learning from practices in North Tyneside who were targeted by a patient who was fraudulently claiming temporary resident status.

### What happened?

The patient registered as a temporary resident, claiming to have a damaged coccyx following a fall, and requested Tramadol which was the only effective pain relief. Diazepam was also requested for fear of flying as the patient claimed she was due to fly in the next few days. The patient claimed to have just returned from living in the USA and hence had no NHS number. Also, identity documents, medication and scripts were claimed to have been lost.



### How did it come to light?

**July 2015:** A North Tyneside practice contacted the NECS Medicines Optimisation CD Team for advice with regard to a patient who had registered as a temporary resident and obtained a supply of tramadol. A **SIRMS incident report was completed** with full details of the suspected fraud.

**October 2015:** Another North Tyneside practice **completed SIRMS with similar descriptions** where Tramadol and diazepam were supplied.

As one individual Medicines Optimisation CD team member has the responsibility for reviewing all SIRMS incidents, the similarities between the two incidents were noticed and the team were able to link the two incidents. This eventually resulted in the patient being arrested and receiving a suspended sentence.

### What can we learn from this?

Reporting incidents on SIRMS can help with the sharing of information and intelligence.

The Temporary Resident system can be exploited. **Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the temporary resident registration form (GNS3/99)? Our contact details are overleaf**

Practice teams need to be aware of which drugs are sought after. These include Tramadol, codeine, co-codamol, co-dydramol, gabapentin, pregabalin, benzodiazepines and morphine sulphate solution.

*The NECS Medicines Optimisation CD Team are running a series of workshops for practice managers and reception staff at CCG Time-Out sessions to discuss the case in detail and to share ideas for improvement. We will share the workshop outcomes in a future newsletter.*

Have you seen the NECS Medicines Optimisation website?

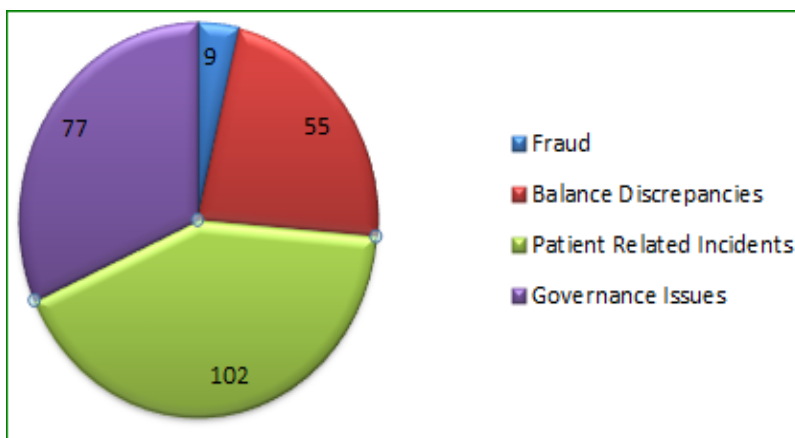
<http://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/controlled-drugs/>

### CD Incidents Reported on SIRMS January to March 2016

243 CD incidents were reported on SIRMS in Q4 2016 from practices and pharmacies in the North East and Cumbria.

Patient related incidents, including prescribing, dispensing and administration of medication including substance misuse, were the most frequently reported incidents.

Governance issues refer to spillages / breakages, lost prescriptions by surgeries and pharmacies, and communication issues.



**Practices can report an incident on SIRMS:** go to <https://sirms.necsu.nhs.uk>

**Community Pharmacies:** contact the **Medicines Optimisation CD Team**, see contact details below.

**If you suspected fraud:** please contact police on 101 and NHS England, to have an alert produced and circulated on: [england.pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net)

### Some common prescribing and dispensing incidents

Oramorph error, where the prescribed dose is 2.5mg but the medicine is labelled as 2.5mls (2.5ml contains 5mg of Oramorph).

Zomorph 100mg prescribed instead of 10mg – the 100mg strength appears at the top of the medicines picking lists on EMIS and SystmOne.

Practices need a robust audit trail whereby there is a record of anyone collecting a CD prescription and them having signed for it, as there have been reports of patients coming a second time to collect a prescription which they have previously collected.



### Future articles / contact us:

If you need advice, or have an idea for an article to be included in a future issue, please contact one of the Controlled Drugs Team Senior Medicines Optimisation Technicians or the CD Liaison Officer:

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**Please don't forget to share this newsletter with your colleagues!**