

ANALYSIS OF OPIOID TREATMENT TRAINING PARTICIPANTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Introduction / Issues: Pharmacotherapy has an important role in treating opioid dependence, however barriers to prescribing exist. Factors identified to increase prescribing include accessible training, and better evidence of safety and efficacy. In New South Wales, the Fundamentals Training course forms part of the training mechanism for opioid pharmacotherapies. Analysing course enrolments will identify current prescriber trends and how prescriber capacity can be increased.

Method / Approach: Enrolment data of the Fundamentals Training course was analysed to determine locality, through Local Health District (LHD) catchment areas, and field of speciality.

Key Findings: Location data of course participants (n=121) indicate that a majority are based within metropolitan LHD catchments (70%), compared to regional or rural settings (30%). Prescriber enrolments were greatest in Sydney (18%), Hunter New England (16%), and Northern Sydney (14%), and lowest in Far West (0%) and Central Coast (1%) LHD catchments.

Prescriber enrolments (n=89) show the most common fields of speciality include general practice (49%), psychiatry (18%), addiction medicine (9%), pain medicine (7%), and nurse practitioner (6%). Non-prescriber (n=32) enrolments also highlight interest from nurses (38%) and pharmacists (28%).

Discussions and Conclusions: A difference in enrolment proportions between metropolitan and regional or rural settings is expected, but overall there is wide variation between LHD catchments. General practitioners form the largest prescriber group and are well placed to provide treatment in a primary care setting, although other prescriber specialities should also be targeted to increase capacity. Enrolments by non-prescribers suggests there is interest to increase understanding of opioid pharmacotherapies.

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