

## A PROTOCOL FOR TOBACCO FREE DETOX UNIT

Renee Bittoun (1), Kylie Tristan (2), Mark Montebello (2) and Sarah Blakemore (2)

1) University of Notre Dame, Sydney Australia

2) Drug and Alcohol Services, NSLHD, Sydney Australia

**Objectives:** Though it has become mandatory for public health facilities to become smoke-free it has been difficult to implement this policy. Particularly complex in-patients in detox units have smoking patients objecting to a smoke free environment, commonly flouting regulations, are argumentative and self-discharge. This leaves staff in conflict with the patients and the regulations and unable to manage patients adequately according to the policy and occasional relaxing of the policy. A protocol has been developed to better educate staff in the management of nicotine addiction and to have a completely smoke-free facility.

**Methods:** Prior to the target for a smoke-free facility for World No Tobacco Day (May 31<sup>st</sup>) all staff of the detox unit were “in serviced” to manage nicotine withdrawals in inpatients so that all staff were “on the same page”. All patients on admission had a nicotine addiction questionnaire applied, an expired baseline expired Carbon Monoxide (exp CO) measure and adequate nicotine replacement therapy initiated. Throughout the admission patients continued to have their nicotine withdrawals assessed, nicotine replacement therapy adjusted and their exp CO monitored in order to demonstrate changes. Weekly “smoking cessation” groups were held with information and suggestions regarding ongoing “management” of smoking and once discharged. All prospective new inpatients were advised that the facility was smoke-free and that the policy was strict, however all smoking patients were advised that their smoking could be “managed” prior to admission and throughout.

**Summary:** Unlike prior attempts there was a smooth transition to a totally smoke-free facility.

All staff had developed a better understanding, measurement and treatment of nicotine withdrawals and patients were better educated and accepting of the newer implementation with the unit having fewer transgressions.

**Implications for Practice:** The education of all staff about nicotine addiction and smoking cessation at detox units allows for a smoother, less conflicting implementation to an uncompromising smoke-free facility.