

# Stopping over-medication of people with a learning disability, autism or both (STOMP) – A community audit



Dr John Carroll (ST4 Psychiatrist) & Jill Davies (Learning Disability Nurse)  
Bromley Community Learning Disability Team, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

## Background

- The stopping over-medication of people with a learning disability, autism or both (STOMP) campaign was launched in England in 2016.
- It aims to reduce the inappropriate prescribing of psychotropic medication to manage challenging behaviour in the absence of a licenced indication.

## Aims

- To demonstrate adherence to national standards within the community learning disability teams (CLDTs) of Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.
- To complete the audit cycle, comparing adherence in the current audit to that of the previous audit in 2019.

## Methods

- Audit standards were derived from national guidance by the Royal College of Psychiatrists<sup>1</sup> and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence<sup>2</sup>.
- The population was defined as all patients open to a prescriber (medical or non-medical) from April 2020 - March 2021.
- A random sample of 20% of patients from each of the three CLDTs (Bexley, Bromley & Greenwich) was generated.
- A multidisciplinary working group agreed inclusion and exclusion criteria before designing an electronic audit questionnaire.
- Data was collected between October - November 2021.

## Results

- Of 111 patient records reviewed, 86 met inclusion criteria.
- 76% (n=65) were prescribed psychotropic medication, of which:
  - 100% (n=65) had response to treatment documented.
  - 86% (n=56) had screening for side effects documented.
  - 85% (n=55) had a medication review within the past 6 months.
  - 78% (n=50) had their capacity to consent to psychotropics documented.
  - 81% (n=42) of those who lacked capacity to consent to psychotropics had a best interests decision documented.
  - 80% (n=52) had been offered non-pharmacological interventions for challenging behaviour.
- All but two standards demonstrated an improvement compared to the 2019 audit (see table 1).

**Table 1** - Adherence to audit standards in 2019 vs 2021.

Audit standard	2019	2021	↑ or ↓
All patients should be assessed for their response to psychotropic medication	91%	100%	↑
All patients should be screened for side effects as part of the psychotropic review	98%	86%	↓
All patients on psychotropics should be reviewed at least every 6 months	86%	85%	↓
All patients should have documented capacity to consent medication	71%	78%	↑
If lacking capacity to consent to, a best interests decision should be documented	41%	81%	↑
Non-pharmacological interventions should be offered for challenging behaviour	79%	80%	↑

## Discussion

- This re-audit demonstrated improved adherence to all but two standards since the previous audit in 2019.
- The worsened adherence to 6-monthly psychotropic reviews and assessment of side effects may be explained by the coinciding covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in:
  - Remote working.
  - Limited staff numbers in consultations.
  - Increased 'did not attend' and cancellation rates.

## Conclusion

- Adherence to most standards improved but only one standard met the 100% target and two standards worsened.
- Dissemination of the findings and an updated action plan are indicated before re-audit in 2023.

### References

1. Royal College of Psychiatrists (2016) Psychotropic drug prescribing for people with intellectual disabilities, mental health problems and/or behaviours that challenge: practice guidelines. Faculty of Psychiatry of Intellectual Disability Report [FR/ID/09]. Access: [id-fr-id-095701b41885e84150b11ccc989330357c.pdf \(rcpsych.ac.uk\)](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/press-releases/2016-12-16-rcpsych-mental-health-problems-and-or-behaviours-that-challenge-practice-guidelines.pdf?sfvrsn=1).
2. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2015) Challenging behaviour and intellectual disability: prevention and interventions for people with intellectual disability whose behaviour challenges [NG11]. Access: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng11>.

**Acknowledgements** – We would like to thank all staff who contributed to this audit.

**Corresponding author** – [johncarroll@nhs.net](mailto:johncarroll@nhs.net).