



Wessex
Academic Health
Science Network

New Medicines Service

Anticoagulation Referral Card Project Newsletter

**ATRIAL FIBRILLATION
PROGRAMME**

Lead: Sharron Gordon, Clinical Lead Pharmacist

Do you want to help improve patient care in anticoagulation?

Do you want to work with your team to be part of something important?

Do you wonder why it matters?

In summer 2016 I met Ethel, a hospital in-patient. She had been started on an oral anticoagulant on a previous admission a few weeks earlier. When she had been discharged home it had been assumed that she knew what medicines she was taking. These medicines were continued by the GP and issued by the community pharmacist. When Ethel suffered from side effects, she was unaware that these side effects (melaena, black sticky poo) were warning signs and she needed to stop the medicine and get urgent help.

What can you do?

We know that the New Medicines Service (NMS) delivered by community pharmacists can improve medicines adherence by 10%. There are very few adherence interventions which deliver such significantly improved outcomes, but NMS discussions for anticoagulation are currently underutilized.

Across Wessex the data shows that there is wide variation in the delivery of NMS for anticoagulation and antiplatelets; from 4% to 17% with the highest rates on the Isle of Wight.

We believe that increasing these figures will keep patients like Ethel safe when they are taking anticoagulants, and we would like to support more Wessex community pharmacists to develop the skills to deliver more NMS's for patients on anticoagulation. We recognise there are challenges but believe that these can be overcome with some work.

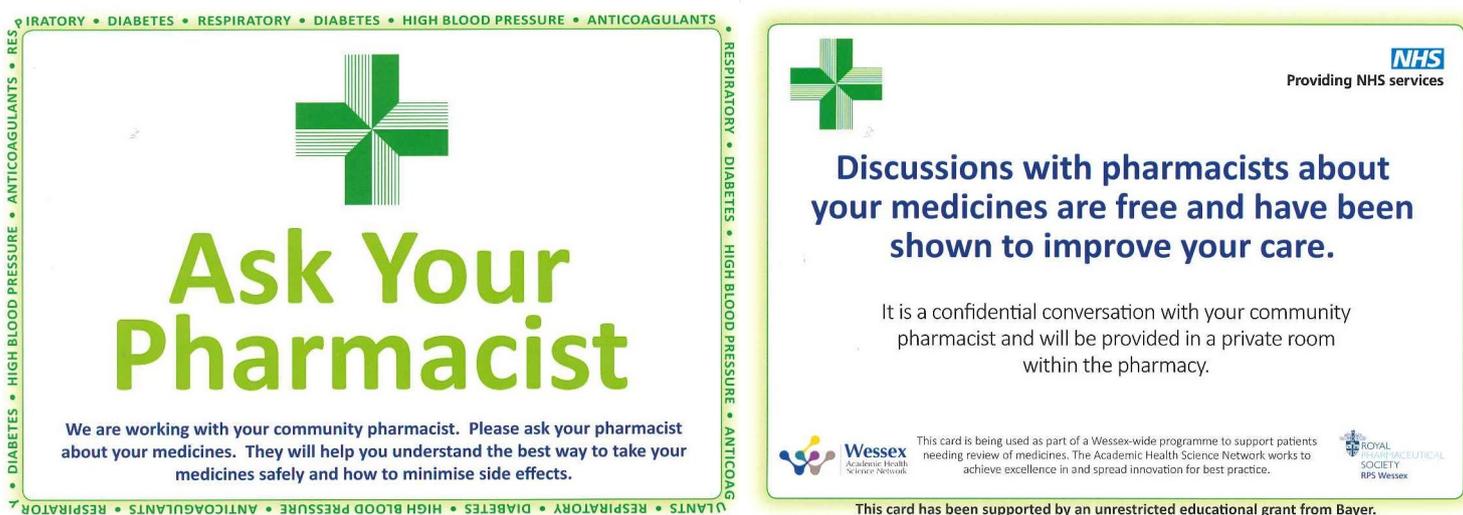
Ethel persevered until she collapsed and had to be resuscitated. Better processes to support and counsel all patients newly started on medicines may have prevented this. We need to ensure that patients are safe when prescribed anticoagulants. Patients have told us that they can't take in all the information that they are given in Hospital, and they welcome the chance to have a conversation with someone about their medicines once they are home and settled.



What have we done?

We have been working with West Hampshire CCG with 27 community pharmacies in 2 localities. Our approach is to provide training sessions to upskill community pharmacists, and we have introduced a referral card (figure 1 & 2). This card will be given to patients newly started on anticoagulants by the GP, to formally invite them to see their pharmacist to discuss their new medicines.

Alongside this we have designed an evaluation card which will be given to patients attending the 27 West Hampshire CCG community pharmacists, to assess their views of the anticoagulation NMS they have received. This will be a time limited survey and results will inform the development of, and educational support for, this service.



Figures 1 & 2 Front and back of NMS referral card

Would you like to know more?

If you would like to work with your local GP's and introduce the referral card or if you would like to know more about the anticoagulation NMS then please do contact the Wessex AHSN Atrial Fibrillation team at: **Medicines.optimisation@wessexahsn.net**

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