

Review of all Clozapine Clinics in a Mental Health Service Governance, Operations, Issues and Solutions

A. Sieff – Senior Pharmacist, Medication Safety and Antimicrobial Stewardship Mental Health
Amy.Sieff@health.nsw.gov.au

Introduction

There are six clozapine clinics within the Mental Health Service (MHS). The clinics differ from each other significantly in their operation, size and resources.

The following brief was issued to reviewers:

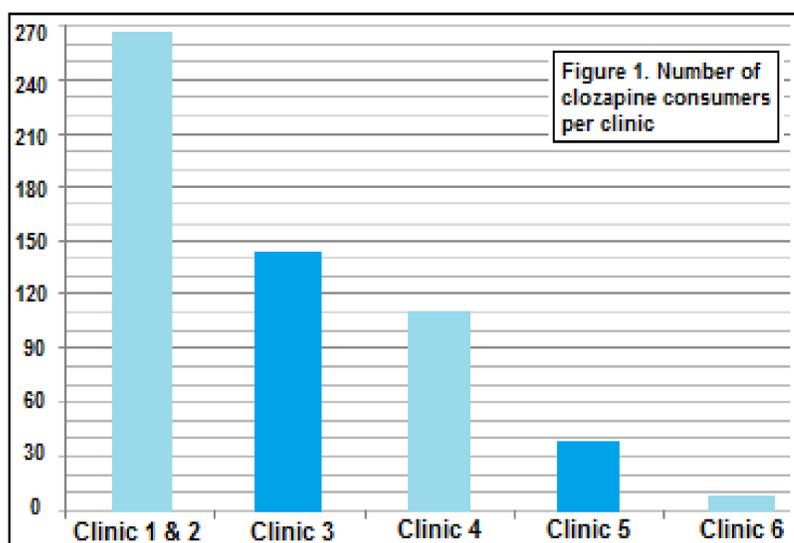
- Review the service model of clozapine clinics across the MHS
- Review the governance of clozapine clinics across the MHS
- Review policies related to clozapine including guidelines for cardiac monitoring for the MHS

Methods

A MHS wide review was undertaken by the Senior Pharmacist to identify, document and address issues in relation to all clozapine clinics, and ultimately clarify their governance structures. The Pharmacist has no direct role in any clinic and could therefore perform the review from an independent perspective.

- ClopineCentral™ data analysis was completed
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with clozapine clinic staff (including clinic coordinators, nursing staff, medical officers and pharmacists)
- A comprehensive report was prepared which provided extensive detail about each clozapine clinic's operations, systems, issues, management and resources
- Issues common to all clozapine clinics were also identified
- Recommendations were made as a result of the report
- Specific issues were discussed at a forum which was attended by clozapine clinic and management staff from across the MHS. Further recommendations arose from this.

Results



More about the clinics:

- The average number of minutes spent with each consumer varied considerably between clinics (from 5 to 30+ minutes)
- All clinics experienced consumer number growth in the preceding five years
- Staff numbers and the roles of different professional disciplines varied between clinics
- The proportion of consumers per clinic with formal case management was significantly higher for clinics with less consumers registered
- Some clinics utilised administrative support staff while others relied upon nursing staff

The clozapine forum

Following finalisation of the review report, a two-hour forum was held with more than 20 key stakeholders from across the MHS. All attendees had access to the review report prior to the meeting. Key points in the report were used to guide the forum agenda, however open discussion was also encouraged.

Policy/Procedure/Guideline documents

It was established that the local clozapine clinical guideline required extensive review. Clarification of several aspects of clozapine management was needed and clinic staff felt that much of this could be included in the guideline. The guideline review was completed subsequent to the forum, with wide consultation, allowing clinic staff as well as managers to contribute.

Governance

It was found that staff within clinics often had different line managers to one another. This led to uncertainty around which managers were responsible for different aspects of clinics and their operations and management as a whole. A governance structure for the clinics was established and formalised.

Clinic oversight and review

As a result of the forum discussions, every clozapine clinic now conducts a local six monthly review of its own functioning, operations and issues. Reviews are minuted and forwarded to the Area Mental Health Therapeutics Committee for noting or action as required. This aligns with the aforementioned governance structures.

Table 1. Examples of outcomes from clozapine clinic review report and stakeholder forum

Discussion & Conclusions

Staff from different clinics were connected through this review process and can now collaborate. The opportunity to be heard was valued by clinic staff. The systems and governance structures which were established from this review will facilitate the continued development of a culture in which staff can effectively raise and escalate issues. Several immediate issues that were identified during this process have been addressed in the updated local clozapine clinical guideline, which was reviewed with wide consultation.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks are extended to all clozapine clinic staff and managers for generously giving their time to participate in all aspects of this review process.