A Practical Approach to Mitigating your Risk in Opioid Prescribing
I have inherited a patient with high dose opioids.

The patient has run out of opioid prescription and seeing another regular GP who is on holidays.

I have escalated opioid doses over time to help with their pain and now it is above the recommended amount.

My patient does not want to reduce their opioids as the current dose is working well and they are functional, but it is higher than the recommended morphine equivalent.

The patient asks why they have been prescribed the opioids all this while and now the dose is too high.
Basic principles of Opioid prescribing

LAW

• Health (Drugs & Poisons) Regulations 1996
• Need to report to the Chief Executive for treatment with and dependence on schedule 8 medicines if treating more than 4 weeks
• You can report notification or apply for an approval for the treatment
• Enquire-13S8INFO (13 78 46)
Basic Principles of Opioid Prescribing

• **Documentation**
  • In practice records
  • Ensure there is a paper trail illustrating the efforts
  • Make sure the documentation is sufficient so if you are not there tomorrow the next person understands the flow/process
  • Make sure its legible
  • Always follow the structure of a systematic process
  • Personal copies if permitted by clinic
  • Back up
Basic principles of Opioid Prescribing

• **Patient & Practitioner Rapport**
  • Build a great relationship of trust and mutual respect with your patient
  • Some give Mobile numbers or clinic confidential email
  • Contracts between patients and you regarding prescribing patterns
  • Stage Supply with the supply pharmacy
  • Educate the patient on reasons for contracts, stage supply (reassure, validate, educate)
  • Bill appropriately
  • Collaborate appropriately
• Don’t panic
• You have not ‘harmed’ the patient and you are not a bad clinician
• Breath and self-care
• Get peer support (Pain Clinic, other GP colleagues, Specialists, Allied Health, Pharmacist)
Screening tools that are helpful for GPs when managing opioids

- **Tools**
  - **Opioid Risk Tool**
  - **Current Opioid Misuse Measure**

- **Prescription Shopping Programme**
  - Australian Government – Dept of Human Services
  - Prescription Shopping Information Services - Tel: 1800631181 (24/7)
Resources

- **State Health - Medicines Regulation and Quality Unit (MRQ)**
  - Tel: 13 78 46
  - Fax: 07 3708 5431
  - Email: [MRQ@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MRQ@health.qld.gov.au)

- **Clinician Enquiry**

- **Quick Guide for GPs**