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Prescribing for smoking cessation: What do pharmacists need to know?

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Abstract

Pharmacists in Ontario were recently permitted to prescribe smoking cessation medications such as bupropion and varenicline. Pharmacotherapeutic options are used in heavy smokers and/or those who tried quitting in the past, but failed. Despite the usefulness of these prescription drugs in helping patients quit smoking, it is essential to know that success in smoking cessation is measured by the progress of the patient through the process of quitting, which is in turn dependent on a combination of behavioural strategies and pharmacotherapeutic approaches in a context of multiple counselling sessions. Behavioural strategies include assessing the patient's willingness to quit smoking, knowing his/her past experiences with quitting, possible barriers to quitting and consistently encouraging and motivating the patient and positively boosting the patient's self-esteem. As such, it is important to emphasize the need to spend time with the patient to encourage and celebrate their progress. These behavioural strategies are equally important to pharmacotherapeutic options.

Biography

Marlene Shehata has received her PhD in Cellular and Molecular Medicine, specializing in Genetics of Cardiovascular Diseases from the University of Ottawa during the period of 2004-2010. Shehata is also a licensed Ontario Pharmacist practicing in Southwestern Ontario. Currently, she is working as a Clinical Pharmacist Consultant in numerous academic hospitals, nursing homes and community pharmacies in Southwestern Ontario. She has successfully completed her Administrative responsibilities as a Manager for the Pharmacy and Clinical Services Department. She is currently the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Pharmacology Research, Associate Editor for the Journal of Eco-biotechnology and The Journal of Biotechnology Applications. She sits on the editorial boards of numerous other journals including the International Archives of Medicine and the African Journal of Biotechnology. Shehata has authored 21research articles, 2 book chapters and 24 abstracts. She is a member of the Canadian Hypertension Society, Canadian Cardiovascular Society, Ontario Pharmacists Association and Ontario College of Pharmacists. She is the 2011 recipient of the Certificate of Excellence by Hypertension Canada and the 2007 Horizon Award recipient by Memorial University of Newfoundland. She was awarded numerous other awards including the Pfizer Canada, Canadian Hypertension Society (CHS) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Doctoral Research Award in 2005, the Ontario Graduate Scholarship in 2005, Merck Frosst Best Basic Science Presentation Award in 2006 and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship for Science and Technology in 2004 and 2006. Marlene was selected as one out of five Canadian pharmacists' finalists in Diabetes Management: Best Practices in Patient Care 2009 Competition; she was recognized on the "Volunteer Wall" on campus the University of Ottawa for sacrificially giving over 180 hours of volunteer work in the 2007 academic year . Her motivation, enthusiasm, and perseverance made her an ideal candidate for receiving the 2008 Have a Heart Bursary by the Canadian Cardiovascular Society.