

Improving Antipsychotic Treatment for Schizophrenia

An Evidence-Based Quality Improvement Project

Why Does Treatment Need to Be Improved?

Mental Health QUERI (MHQ) has found that antipsychotic prescribing often deviates from two VHA guideline recommendations:

- ▶ to use moderate antipsychotic doses
- ▶ to switch non-responding patients to newer antipsychotics

Following these guidelines is likely to improve patient outcomes.

How Can Treatment Be Improved?

MHQ has developed an evidence-based quality improvement project designed to help VHA treatment facilities implement these guideline recommendations.

Where Will the QI Project Be Conducted?

Phase 1 of the project will take place in the South Central VA Health Care Network (SCVAHCN). Phase 2 will test a strategy to disseminate the project throughout the VA.

When Will This Happen?

SCVAHCN activities started in April 2001. They will be expanded to two other networks in early 2002 and to the national level starting in 2003.

What Will Happen In SCVAHCN?

Managers, clinicians, and patients will receive specific educational materials about the treatment of schizophrenia. At four sites, personnel will participate in an intensive quality improvement project that will include:

- ▶ ***On-site training of staff*** through intensive training of key providers (translation leaders)
- ▶ ***Clinical Reminders*** in CPRS that prompt guideline-concordant prescribing practices
- ▶ ***Monthly feedback*** regarding—
 - ◆ use of moderate antipsychotic doses
 - ◆ switching inpatients on conventional agents to newer antipsychotics
- ▶ ***Ongoing technical support*** to help staff use these tools effectively

The VHA's Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI), led by the Office of Research and Development and the Health Services Research and Development Service, is a national program focusing on eight high-risk conditions prevalent among veterans. The Mental Health QUERI works to improve the quality of care for veterans with major depressive disorder or schizophrenia by translating research knowledge into everyday clinical and organizational practice. The MHQ (led by Richard R. Owen, MD), the SCVAHCN MIRECC, and the SCVAHCN Mental Health Product Line are collaborating on this project. For more information, contact: Dale Chadwick, MBA, 2200 Fort Roots Drive, 152/NLR, North Little Rock, AR 72114; Phone: 501-257-1068; Fax: 501-257-1707; E-mail: rousmanierdalec@uams.edu.

