

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Integrating the diagnosis and treatment of nicotine addiction into healthcare in Ireland - from policy to practice

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Smoking is a leading cause of preventable death and disability in Ireland. Government policy has set direction towards Ireland becoming tobacco free by 2025. This paper describes how the diagnosis and treatment of nicotine addiction is being integrated into healthcare in Ireland by the Health Service Executive [HSE] and presents a model linking policy with practice.

A multidisciplinary group was established by the HSE to lead on implementation of government tobacco control policy, Tobacco Free Ireland, in services operated or funded by the HSE. A strategic plan was developed to support and monitor improved diagnosis and treatment of nicotine addiction through a range of inter-related measures:

- A tobacco free campus policy was developed and mandated by the HSE Senior Leadership Team for implementation across all HSE operated and funded services;
- A series of targetted and evidence-based mass multi-media campaigns were developed and implemented;
- Existing hospital and community smoking cessation services were strenghtened through development and rolled out of a National Standard for Tobacco Cessation Support Programme and National Clinical Guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of nicotine addiction are in development;
- A telephone support service for quitters was commissioned to enhance the reach of smoking cessation services;
- Brief intervention training was commissioned and delivered to hospital and community staff;
- An electronic client-centred Patient Management System was commissioned to support smoking cessation services and to strenghtened monitoring and evaluation of service effectiveness;
- A research and information programme was established to support policy implementation.
- A set of Key Performance Indicators were designed and integrated into performance monitoring across all services to track implementation of key measures across the HSE so as to achieve policy implementation.

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The presentation will describe the challenges of achieving effective policy implementation so as to prioritise prevention across complex and changing health service contexts and will offer lessons learned that will be applicable to other health care organisations seeking to adopt similar directions.

Keywords: smoking cessation; policy implementation; integrated care
