

## Case 3 – Jason

Jason, a 22 year old unemployed male, presents at 4.30pm on a busy Friday. He is not local and says he is travelling to get to a remote town 80 kilometres away to get away from his friends with whom he has been “chasing the dragon”. Over the past year he has been using 4 or 5 times daily but plans to go “cold turkey”. Simon is requesting just one script for MS Contin which he knows will help his withdrawal symptoms in the first couple of days.

### Best Practice Response

#### **Material facts**

- The relevant facts are:
  - Jason presents at 4.30pm on a busy Friday;
  - Jason is not a local and is travelling;
  - Over the past year, Jason has been using 4 or 5 times daily;
  - Jason is requesting one script of MS Contin.

#### **Relevant ethical considerations and medico-legal issues**

- MS Contin is a schedule 8 drug. Doctors need to manage the risks relating to schedule 8 medications<sup>i</sup>:
  - Is there a therapeutic need and is this the most appropriate medication for the patient?
  - Is the patient likely to be drug dependent – are they exhibiting drug seeking behavior?
  - Should Medicare Australia’s Prescription Shopping Information Service (PSIS) of the state or territory’s poisons and drug regulation department be contacted?
  - 1. Is a permit or authority necessary? What are the relevant state or territory legislative requirements for prescribing drugs of dependence?<sup>ii</sup>
- In determining whether a patient is exhibiting drug seeking behavior, there are a number of potential indicators to consider<sup>iii</sup>:
  - Presenting at the end of the day, outside regular consulting hours, or on weekends;
  - Providing a clear description of symptoms with little in the way of any physical signs;
  - Claiming to have lost or forgotten their medication or prescription, or had their previous prescription stolen;
  - Saying they are from interstate or visiting friends or relatives;
  - Requesting a specific medication and declining any suggested alternative;
  - Declining to give any details of their current treating doctors;
  - Applying pressure, e.g. by provoking pity, guilt or the sense of being threatened.

### **MDA's recommendations**

- Determine if an authority or permit is required, if necessary ring your MDO for advice.
- If you do prescribe, ensure detailed notes are kept setting out your reasoning for prescribing the particular Schedule 8 medication(s) to the patient.

### **Links to resources:**

<http://mdanintranet/teams/marketing/brandcom/Promotional%20Material/Things%20To%20Think%20About%20Before%20you%20Prescribe%20Schedule%208%20Drugs%208264.1.pdf>

FAQ S8 State and Territory prescribing legislation updated 2017 Feb 6.pdf

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<sup>i</sup> MDA National. *Things to Think About Before You...Prescribe Schedule 8 Drugs*. Pdf available at <https://www.mdanational.com.au/~media/Files/MDAN-Corp/Resources/Prescribe-Schedule-8-Drugs.pdf?la=en>

<sup>ii</sup> Walter J. *Opioid Prescribing Legislation and Regulation*. 22 February 2017. Available at <https://www.mdanational.com.au/Resources/Articles-and-Case-Studies/2017/07/Opioid-Prescribing-Legislation-and-Regulation>

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid at (1)