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COMPUS and the CADC: National and provincial collaboration in optimal prescribing recommendations

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Background: Academic detailing is a form of continuing education in which a trained health care professional visits clinicians in their offices to provide a one-on-one evidence-informed educational session. Systematic reviews have shown that academic detailing is effective in changing clinician behaviour. In Canada, health is a provincial responsibility, while the national government approves medications and sets standards. Six Canadian provinces with academic detailing programs have formed the Canadian Academic Detailing Collaboration (CADC) to share expertise and promote evidence-based practice. COMPUS, the Canadian Optimal Medication Prescribing and Utilization Service, (a directorate of the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health) is a Pan-Canadian service funded by Health Canada that identifies and promotes optimal drug therapy. COMPUS and the CADC have been collaborating for several years.

Purpose: The purpose of the COMPUS/CADC collaboration is to develop and disseminate recommendations and key messages to optimize prescribing.

Methods: Through an extensive literature review and appraisal of studies, COMPUS produces cost-effectiveness evidence, and develops evidence-based recommendations. A member of the CADC serves on the COMPUS committee that develops recommendations. Other members of the CADC help in developing key messages and producing tools to aid dissemination and uptake of the recommendations. Finally, the CADC academic detailing programs disseminate the COMPUS key messages through their educational visits with clinicians.

Results: An example of COMPUS/CADC collaboration has been the development and dissemination of evidence-based recommendations for optimal prescribing of proton pump inhibitors. Together they created key educational messages and knowledge translation tools including: interactive case studies, a newsletter, an alternate prescription pad to promote lifestyle changes, a cost-comparison chart, and an evidence overview. Future endeavours may include insulin analogues and self-monitoring of blood glucose.

Discussion: The COMPUS/CADC collaboration is an example of national and provincial evidence-based groups working together in knowledge translation to promote optimal prescribing.