Algorithm for Tailoring Pharmacotherapy in Primary Care Settings

Ask about tobacco use: How much do you smoke? 0 - ___ cigarettes per day (cpd)? (one large pack = 25 cpd, one small pack = 20 cpd)

Motivational Interviewing
Assess the 5 R’s:
Relevance
Rewards
Risk
Roadblocks
Repetition

Advise: As your physician, I am concerned about your tobacco use, and advise you to quit. Would you like my help?

Assess Readiness: Given everything going on in your life, on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is lowest...
How important is it for you to quit smoking?
How confident are you that you can quit smoking?

Assist in Quit Attempt: Would you like to quit abruptly?

Low importance or confidence (≤ 5)

High importance or confidence (>5)

Reduce to Quit (RTQ)
Step 1: (0-6 weeks)
- Smoker sets a target for no. of cigarettes per day to cut down and a date to achieve it by (at least 50% recommended)
- Smoker uses gum to manage cravings

Step 2: (6 weeks up to 6 months)
- Smoker continues to cut down cigarettes using gum - Goal should be complete stop by 6 months - Smoker should seek advice from HCP if smoking has not stopped within 9 months

Step 3: (within 9 months)
- Smoker stops all cigarettes and continues to use gum to relieve cravings

Step 4: (within 12 months)
- Smoker cuts down the amount of gum used, then stops gum use completely (within 3 months of stopping smoking)

Consider combination pharmacotherapy, based on:
1. failed attempt with monotherapy
2. breakthrough cravings
3. level of dependence
4. multiple failed attempts
5. experiencing nicotine withdrawal

Choose the following combinations:
1. Two or more forms of NRT
   a. patch (15mg) + gum (2mg)
   b. patch + inhaler
   c. patch + lozenge
2. Bupropion + form of NRT
   a. Bupropion + patch
   b. Bupropion + gum

No Varenicline with NRT

Arrange Follow Up
1. Monitor carefully
2. Consider contraindications
3. Consider comorbidities and specific pharmacotherapy
4. Consider dual purpose medications
5. If after 4 weeks no response, consider alternative 1st line medications.*

No NRT failed?
- Y
- N

Has NRT failed?
- Y/N
- Is weight gain a concern?
- N
- Y
- ...History of seizures?
- N
- ...History of unstable mental illness?
- N
- ...Eating disorder?
- N
- ...Allergic to Bupropion?
- N
- ...Previous non-responder?
- N
- ...Want to quit in 7 days?
- N

= Bupropion SR

Has bupropion/NRT failed?
- Y
- N

- Is weight gain a concern?
- N
- Y

= Varenicline

Has NRT failed?
- Y/N

- Is weight gain a concern?
- N
- Y

=(Gum, Patch, Lozenge or Inhaler)

Have you tried quitting cold turkey?
- Yes
- No

= NRT

Cold Turkey
- No

Has bupropion/NRT failed?
- N

= No response

Partial response

Consider combination pharmacotherapy, based on:
1. failed attempt with monotherapy
2. breakthrough cravings
3. level of dependence
4. multiple failed attempts
5. experiencing nicotine withdrawal

Choose the following combinations:
1. Two or more forms of NRT
   a. patch (15mg) + gum (2mg)
   b. patch + inhaler
   c. patch + lozenge
2. Bupropion + form of NRT
   a. Bupropion + patch
   b. Bupropion + gum

No Varenicline with NRT

Arrange Follow Up
1. Monitor carefully
2. Consider contraindications
3. Consider comorbidities and specific pharmacotherapy
4. Consider dual purpose medications
5. If after 4 weeks no response, consider alternative 1st line medications.*

No response

Yes

No

Yes: Pharmacotherapy

@ 4 weeks

* N.B. for 2nd line medications (clonidine and nortriptyline), see guidelines.

Developed by Peter Selby, MBBS, CCFP. This algorithm is based on: