



**Understanding how the alcohol
dependence drug nalmefene
has been used in the UK:
analysis using primary care
prescribing data**

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Funders:
Alcohol Change UK
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Is nalmefene a paradigm shift in alcohol treatment?



Reduced drinking

Weak evidence

As-needed

Issues with clinical trials

Primary care

Bad medicine?



Trial and prescribing theory

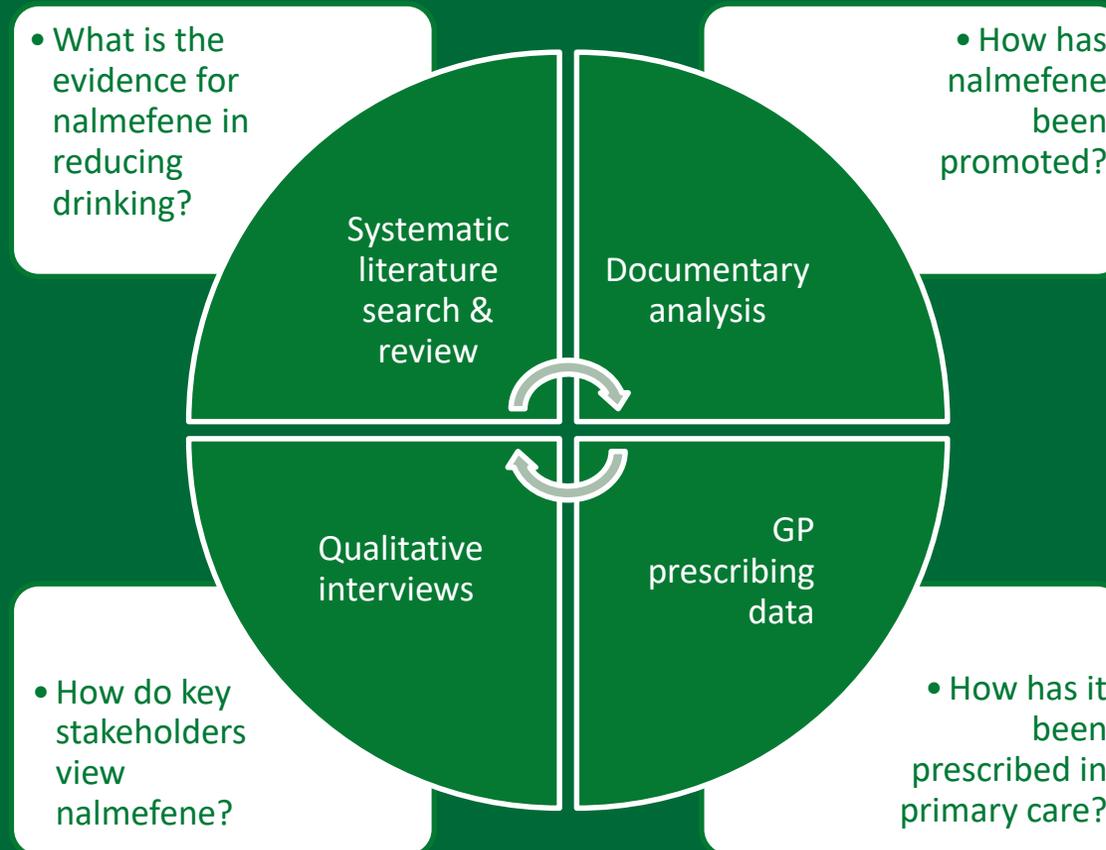


VERSUS



Prescribing reality

Overview: Study research questions and methods



GP prescribing data sources

National-level data - monthly prescribing by all General Practices in England (OpenPrescribing.net)

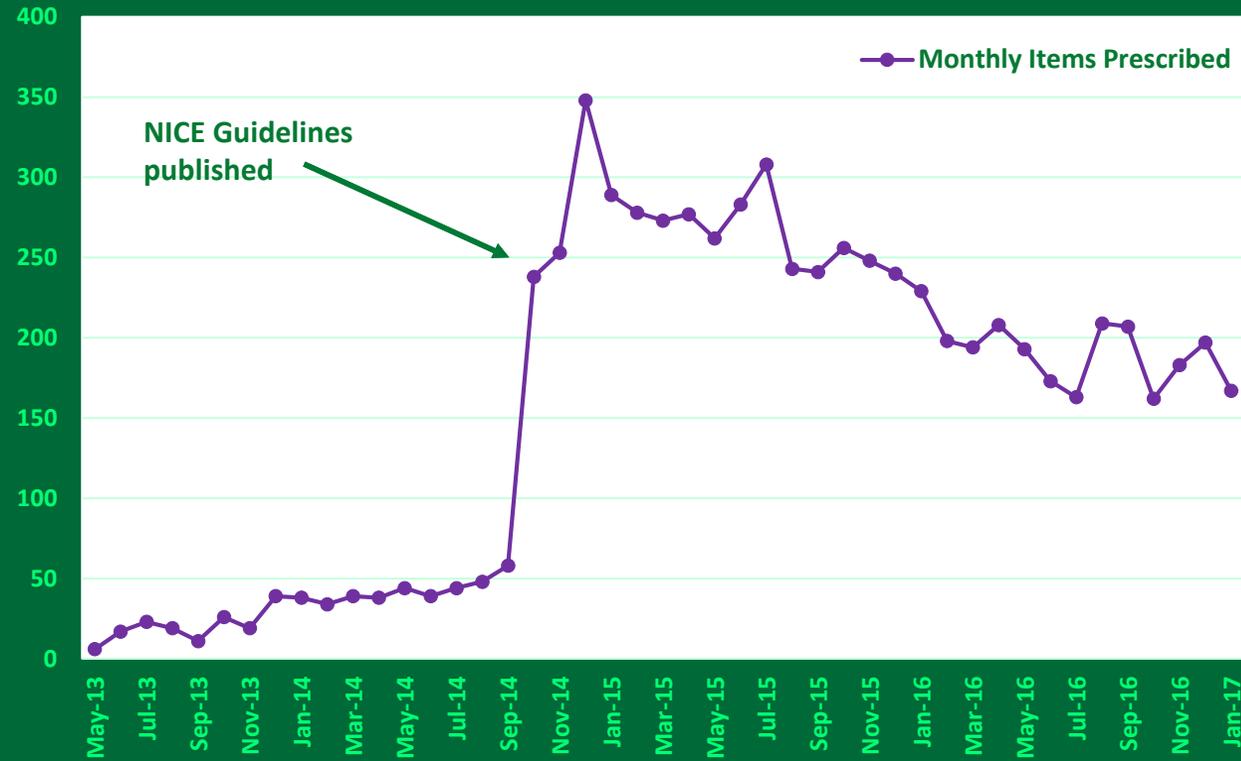
- What are the general trends and patterns?

Patient-level data from Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD)

- Which types of patients have received nalmefene?
- How similar/different to the licensed patient group?
- To what extent has nalmefene engaged 'new' patients?
- How has the drug been prescribed?



Trends: Monthly nalmefene prescribing (All general practices in England)



Source: OpenPrescribing.net, EBM DataLab, University of Oxford, 2017



Nalmefene patients: Reality V trial population

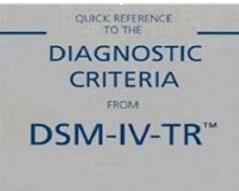
- ❑ **Gender:** 58% male; 42% female
 - *(Approx. 70% male in clinical trials)*

- ❑ **Age:** mean=50 years; median=50 years
 - *(Mean age in trials approx. 47 years)*

- ❑ **Comorbidity** (receipt of other medications in previous 12 months):
 - 49% SSRI anti-depressants
 - *(Few patients in clinical trials with psychiatric comorbidities)*

- ❑ **Contact with GP or Practice Nurse** in previous 12 months
 - Mean number of F2F or Tel consultations = 7.7
 - *General population estimates range from 4.7 to 5.1*

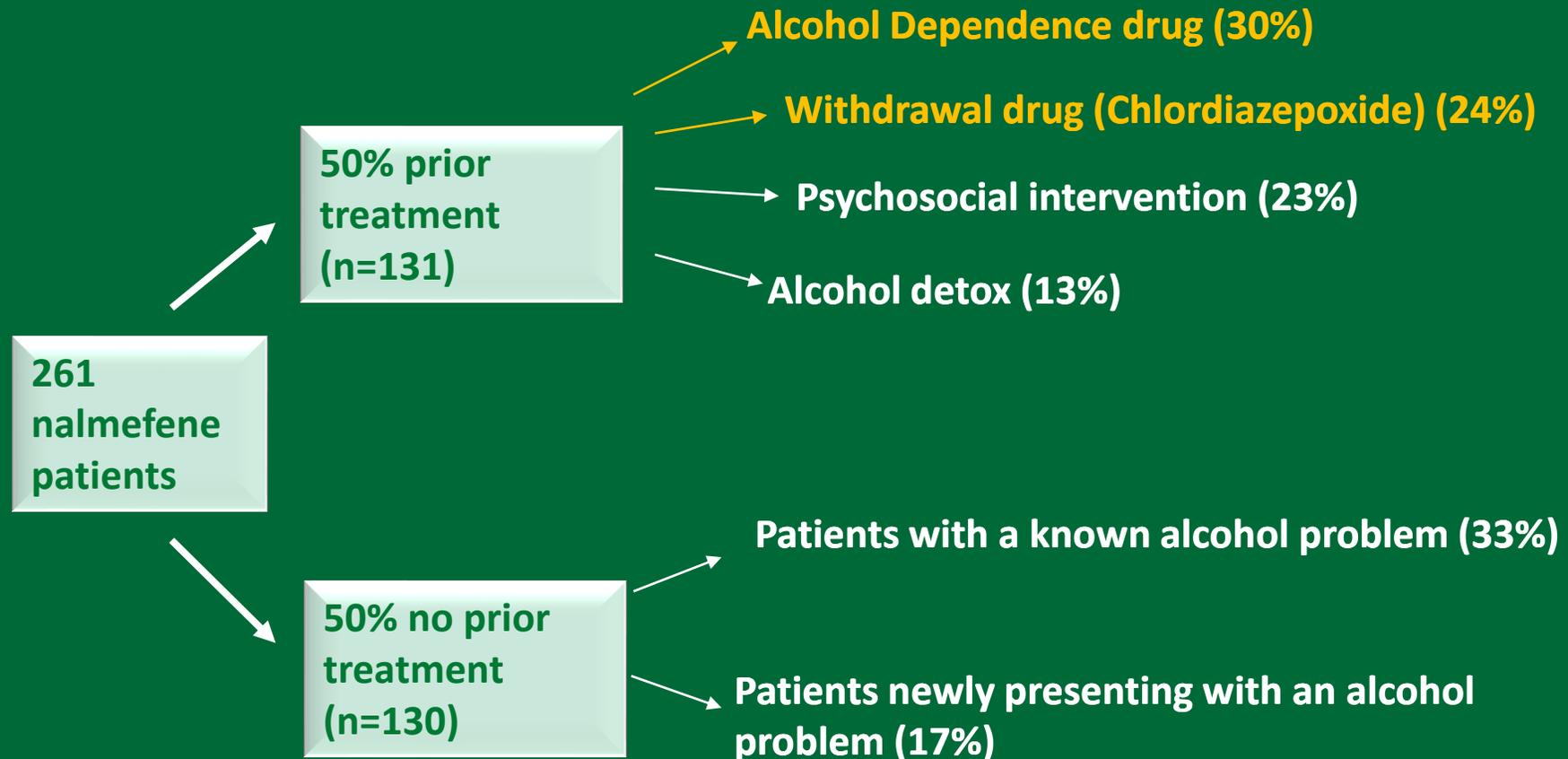
Nalmefene patients: Reality V licenced patient group

Licensed patient group	Patients prescribed nalmefene
Alcohol Dependence diagnosis (without withdrawal)	 43% of patients with a recorded diagnosis of Alcohol Dependence*
High Drinking Risk Level at initial assessment and 2 weeks later (>7.5 units/day in men and >5units/day)	 63% of patients with a High Drinking Risk Level**
Psychosocial Support to be given with nalmefene	 8% with a medical Read code indicating Psychosocial Support*

*Read codes specified by Thompson et al, 2017

**Only a third of patients had a recent entry for alcohol units

Nalmefene patients: Engaging a new cohort into treatment?



Nalmefene patients: Prescription data

- ❑ Number of prescriptions received?
 - 61% with 1 prescription only

- ❑ How frequently do patients take nalmefene?
 - Maximum dose = 1 tablet per day
 - Clinical trials – approx. 15 tablets per month
 - Nalmefene patients – approx. 21 tablets per month





Emerging conclusions and discussion points

- Prescribing reality is not equal to trial and licensing theory
 - GPs are prescribing to a wide range of patients across the continuum of alcohol problems
 - Challenges in selecting patients who meet the licensing conditions for nalmefene
 - Implications for the licensing of new alcohol treatment medications
 - Nalmefene not popular with GPs, also not popular with patients?
 - Some success in engaging 'new' patients into treatment?
 - Next steps - Exploring these issues in the qualitative data
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Thank you

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