Monitoring the prescribing of Controlled Drugs using ePACT.net

A guide to monitoring the prescribing of controlled drugs dispensed in primary care for Primary Care Trust and Hospital Trust ePACT.net users

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Introduction

The Controlled Drugs (Supervision of Management and Use) Regulations 2006 states that Accountable Officers (AOs) should ensure that NHS and private prescribing of controlled drugs (CDs) are monitored by use of ePACT.net system. This manual provides practical step by step instructions on how to use the system effectively to identify outlying or unusual controlled drug (CD) prescribing that may warrant further investigation.

The techniques outlined in the manual assume that users are familiar with the basic use of ePACT.net and Excel and are competent in:

- Making ePACT.net data selections
- Applying and processing ePACT.net report templates
- Saving ePACT.net report data using Snapshot
- Opening files in Excel

It is recommended that accountable officers ensure that staff that are regularly monitoring ePACT.net CD prescribing are competent in the basic use of ePACT.net. Hands-on ePACT.net training and specialist CD monitoring training is available to PCTs and Trusts – for further information contact barryjlloyd@prescribing.uk.com.

The existing CD monitoring techniques using ePACT.net have been updated to allow PCTs to extract and examine CD prescribing in a more efficient manner. The previous method was based on profiling practices for CD prescribing and downloading and saving report data for all practices above the PCT average. This involved processing and saving a large number of ePACT.net reports and assumed that the CD monitoring was carried out in a single ePACT.net session by an experienced pharmaceutical area.

The new techniques reflect how ePACT.net is used in organisations, with routine ePACT.net reporting carried out by data analysts or clerical staff rather than prescribing advisers. The new method allows ePACT.net data to be processed, saved and formatted in Excel by analysts or clerical staff and the spreadsheets studied by an experienced prescribing adviser. The techniques reduce the time taken to process ePACT.net CD prescribing data and when formatted in Excel allows greater flexibility in analysing the data.

Some of the techniques provided in this guide are not relevant for hospital ePACT.net users. However, the guide gives details of ePACT.net report templates that have been provided to allow controlled drug prescribing data to be extracted for hospital trusts. The Excel analytical techniques are the same as for PCT users.
What's new?

New report templates have been provided to obtain practice profiles and detailed CD prescribing reports for CD injections and Schedule 2 (S2) and Schedule 3 (S3) CDs. Additional report templates have been provided to monitor private CD prescribing and non-medical prescriber CD prescribing.

A summary of the changes is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Method</th>
<th>New Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CD injections</strong></td>
<td>Two ePACT.net reports processed and saved to provide information for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Profile CD prescribing by practice.</td>
<td>• CD injections profile by practice (PCT users only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For each practice above the PCT average process and save a Prescribing Catalogue report.</td>
<td>• Detailed CD injections presentation data by practice or cost centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Catalogues examined and if further information required process the Prescriber Dispenser Report for selected practices and formulations.</td>
<td>• Reports are opened and formatted in Excel. The Excel AutoFilter function is used to allow data to be examined by practice, presentation, quantity prescribed and type of prescribing (MDA, personally administered and non-medical prescribing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If further information is required process the Prescriber Dispenser Report for selected organisations and presentations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **S2 and S3 CDs** | Four ePACT.net reports processed and saved to provide information for: |
| • Produce detailed BNF presentation reports for S2 and S3 CDs. | • S2 and S3 profiles by practice (PCTs only) |
| • Use the Active Prescribers report to identify practices prescribing large quantities or unusual formulation. | • Detailed S2 and S3 CD presentation data by practice or cost centre |
| • For each practice identified in the Active Prescribers reports process the Prescribing Catalogue Report. | • Reports are opened and formatted in Excel. The Excel AutoFilter function is used to allow data to be examined by practice, presentation, quantity prescribed and type of prescribing (MDA, personally administered and non-medical prescribing). |
| • If further information is required process the Prescriber Dispenser Report for selected practices and presentations. | • If further information is required process the Prescriber Dispenser Report for selected organisations and presentations. |

| **Private CD Prescribing (PCTs only).** | Report templates and instructions have been provided to report on private CD prescribing. |

| **Non-medical CD prescribing (PCTs only).** | Templates have been provided to allow monitoring of non-medical CD prescribing by both practice and PCT based non-medical prescribers. |

| **Monitoring prescribing in other CD schedules.** | Instructions have been provided on how to adapt the monitoring techniques to analyse prescribing in other CD schedules. |
Using the guide

To aid analysis a traffic light system has been used to guide you through the monitoring process:

Techniques described in sections where pages have a green border should be carried out routinely with the report results saved and archived.

Techniques shown on pages with an amber border need only be used if you have concerns regarding any of the prescribing identified in the routine analysis.

Analysis detailed on pages with a red border is only required if you have serious concerns regarding prescribing within a practice and wish to retrieve prescriptions from the PPA for examination prior to a PCT investigation of prescribing for the practice.

**Obtain FP10 Controlled Drugs prescribing data from ePACT.net**

Six ePACT.net reports are processed using the predefined report templates listed below. The reports are saved in HTML format.

Hospital users do not have practice report equivalents as trust cost centres do not have patient list information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CD Injections Practice Report (PCT users)</th>
<th>Detailed CD Injections report (PCT users)</th>
<th>Hospital Detailed CD Injns report (hospital users)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S2 CD Practice report (PCT users)</td>
<td>Detailed S2 CD report (PCT users)</td>
<td>Hospital Detailed S2 report (hospital users)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3 CD Practice report (PCT users)</td>
<td>Detailed S3 CD report (PCT users)</td>
<td>Hospital Detailed S3 report (hospital users)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional report templates are also provided to allow monitoring of non-medical CD prescribing and private controlled drugs.

**Open and format the CD prescribing data in Excel**

The ePACT.net reports are opened in Excel and AutoFilter applied to allow analysis by practice, presentation and quantities prescribed.

**Examine the CD spreadsheets**

The spreadsheets should be examined by an experienced prescribing adviser to establish if any unusual prescribing that requires further investigation. If no abnormal prescribing is detected there is no need to proceed any further and the spreadsheets should be saved and securely archived.
Prescriber Dispenser Report

The report is applied against individual practices where unusual prescribing has been identified in the previous reports. This report is not applied routinely for all CD prescribing in all practices. The report provides a detailed breakdown for the selected practice and CD presentation(s) identifying by month, prescriber name and code, dispenser information and form number. This information can be used to request a prescription search by NHS RxS if necessary.

Open and format the Prescriber Dispenser report(s) in Excel

Open in Excel to allow analysis by period and prescriber name, presentation and quantities prescribed and dispenser information.

Examine the Prescriber Dispenser report spreadsheets

The report data is studied by an experienced prescribing adviser to establish if prescribing warrants further investigation. If satisfied that the prescribing is justifiable there is no need to proceed any further and the spreadsheet should be saved and securely archived.

Request a prescription search

If after examination of the Prescriber Dispenser report data there are still concerns around CD prescribing the Accountable Officer can use the report data to request a prescription search.
Key points when monitoring CD prescribing using ePACT.net

Data selections
Controlled drugs prescribing (schedules 1 to 5) only make up around 5% of all FP10 prescriptions, with schedules 1 to 3 accounting for less than a quarter of all CD prescribing.

Attempting to detect abnormal patterns for S2 CD injections by monitoring the BNF paragraph Opiate Analgesics would be impossible as S2 CD analgesic prescribing only makes up 1% of all opiate analgesics.

To be able to detect abnormal CD patterns reports need to be applied against small distinct CD selections. The report templates provided automatically apply specific CD schedule tags to the data selector.

Examining CD prescribing data
Data analysts, or other non-pharmaceutical staff, are increasingly the main ePACT.net users and routinely produce all prescribing reports. When monitoring CD prescribing, it is important that experienced pharmaceutical advisers study the ePACT.net reports produced and decide if any area of prescribing warrants further investigation.

Unfortunately there is no magical statistical technique that can be applied to automatically detect abnormal CD prescribing. In many cases unusual prescribing patterns are detected by experienced users who simply feel that prescribing simply ‘doesn’t look right’.

CD reports must be studied by experienced advisers
Saving data

Reports generated from ePACT.net may be required for evidential purposes. It is important that these reports are saved by using the Snapshot module as HTML files rather than exporting data or copying and pasting data into spreadsheets.

The HTML files are opened in Excel for formatting and manipulation but are saved as Excel workbooks. The original HTML files remain unchanged and provide a legend detailing the data selections used and the date the report was produced. Data copied and pasted into a spreadsheet could be challenged in court as entries could have been altered.

To save report data in HTML format:

- Click on the report **Snapshot** button

The report opens in a second internet browser and also contains a legend detailing data selector settings, patient denominator type used and the date the report was produced.

The report should be saved in a suitable folder using the format Web page HTML only.

- In the second browser select **File** and **Save as**.

- Select a location to save the file.

- Enter a filename.

- From the **Save as type** list select **Webpage HTML only** [*.htm,*.html]

- **Close** the second browser.

**HTML files provide a legend detailing the date the report was produced and the data selections.**

Experienced users who prefer to use the Export data method may substitute this option for Snapshot for routine analysis but will need to reprocess, and save, reports in HTML format if they are needed for evidence.
Requesting prescriptions from NHS Prescription Services (RxS)

There may be occasions where CD prescriptions need to be retrieved from NHS Prescription Services (RxS). Contrary to popular belief, prescriptions for PCT prescribers are not stored in neat piles by practice name. Prescriptions are in fact stored in large secure warehouses in batches by dispenser.

Prescription retrieval is a labour intensive process as around 30 million prescriptions per month are processed and stored. Accountable Officers should only request prescriptions back from NHS Prescription Services if they have serious concerns regarding the prescribing of controlled drugs.

A request form needs to be completed by the AO to request prescriptions retrieval.

Requests for more than three months data will be given lower priority and it is recommended that AOs initially sample prescriptions for a single month to speed up the retrieval process. Prescription images are available for the most recent 5 months prescribing data and can be retrieved quicker than paper prescription forms.

It is important that AOs ensure that all retrieval requests are justifiable. Large requests will delay the process and potentially create a back log within the system.

Before requesting a prescription search AOs may wish to consider other options to explain unusual CD prescribing:

- **Contact the prescriber** – unless the AO considers that contact with the prescriber at this stage may compromise an investigation a telephone call can often explain unusual prescribing. In many cases the prescribing of apparent large quantities or high strengths of CD analgesics will be genuine prescribing for patients with severe pain. Often this prescribing will have been initiated by secondary care specialists.

- **Contact the dispenser** – PCTs may identify CDs that have been dispensed at pharmacies located in other parts of the country. It is not unusual for CDs to be dispensed outside the PCT area. For example, substance misuse patients relocating to other areas of the country will continue to have prescriptions issued from their old prescriber until their transfer to a substance misuse team in the new PCT is completed. There will also be occasions where terminally ill patients are looked after by relatives in other parts of the country with prescriptions continuing to be issued by their own GP.

However, if PCTs identify large clusters of prescriptions dispensed in other PCTs over a number of months this prescribing should be investigated. AOs can initially contact the dispenser to confirm the name of the prescriber that issued the prescriptions.

If the prescriber name does not match the name displayed in the ePACT.net reports it may suggest that a prescriber from another PCT has had their prescriber code incorrectly entered into a GP clinical system with this code matching that of a prescriber in the AO’s PCT. If this is the case the PCT should supply this information when they fill in the NHS RxS prescription retrieval form.

Detailed instructions on how to obtain the relevant information required for prescription retrieval is provided in this manual.
Obtaining Controlled Drugs prescribing data from ePACT.net

CD Injections Practice Report (PCT users only)

- Select a suitable date range
- Select Reporting
- From the template list select CD Injections Practice Report

The report template loads and applies the BNF CD injections tag and the accumulated PCT. If you wish to process the report against a locality group select the organisation tag you have created for the locality and apply using Show selections.

- Select Run Now to process the report
- Click on the Snapshot button
- Save the report data as Webpage HTML only

Important

Prescribing for ‘dummy practices’, such as substance dependence units, PCT run pain clinics or hospices, will be displayed at the top of the report. These will appear to have extremely high Cost per 1000 PU and Items per 1000 PU values as they have been assigned a small token PU denominator value which means that their Cost or Items per 1000 PU values will appear extremely high.

In some PCTs there may be substantial amounts of CD prescribing from dummy practices and this will inflate the PCT average so that some GP practices may appear to be prescribing below the PCT average. If this is the case users may wish to create and save a tag of PCT practices excluding the dummy practices which can be applied as the parent in the practice profile CD reports to give a more accurate comparison to average prescribing rates for GP practices.
Detailed CD Injections report

- On the CD Injection Practice Report click on the Properties button to revert to the template view.
- From the template list select the Detailed CD Injns report.
- Select Run Now to process the report.
- Click on the Snapshot button
- Save the report data as Webpage HTML only

Hospital users

Select the Hospital Detailed CD Injns report. Because the volume of CD data in the hospital system is lower for trusts this report also provides dispenser information.

S2 CD Practice report (PCT users only)

- Click on the Properties button to revert to the template view.
- From the template list select the S2 CD Practice report template.
- Select Run Now to process the report.
- Click on the Snapshot button
- Save the report data as Webpage HTML only
Detailed S2 CD report

- Click on the Properties button to revert to the template view.
- From the template list select the Detailed S2 CD report template
- Select Run Now to process the report.
- Click on the Snapshot button
- Save the report data as Webpage HTML only

Hospital users

Select the Hospital Detailed S2 report. Because the volume of CD data in the hospital system is lower for trusts this report also provides dispenser information.

S3 CD Practice and Detailed S3 CD reports

Follow the same techniques as used for the S2 CD Practice and Detailed S2 CD reports to process and save the S3 CD Practice and Detailed S3 CD reports.

Hospital users

Use the same technique to process and save the Hospital Detailed S3 report
Manipulating ePACT.net data in Excel

Practice Reports (PCT users only)

- Open Excel
- Select and open a saved CD Practice Report

The report can be formatted if necessary to remove the NHS Business Services logo and the report title but this is not essential.

The reports will include zero values for some practices (even with suppress zeros suppressed) as PCT comparator values are included. Practices with no CD prescribing can be manually deleted from the spreadsheet.

The CD injections Practice Report is sorted in descending order of Cost per 1,000 PU and the S2 and S2 Practice reports in descending order of Items per 1,000 PU.
Practices above the PCT average can be highlighted by selecting them and changing the font colour.

For the CD Injections Practice report highlight practices above the PCT average for Cost per 1,000 PU then sort the list by Items per 1,000 PU.

- Select any cell in the Items Per Denominator column and from the Excel toolbar click on the Sort Descending button.

- Select all practices above the PCT average for Items per 1,000 PU and change the font colour (this will include some practices that are also above the PCT average for cost).

The report now clearly identifies practices above the PCT average and can be used in conjunction with the detailed CD reports to examine prescribing in detail for these practices.

- Save the report in Excel format.

Repeat the procedures for all other CD Practice reports.
Detailed CD reports

These reports are used in conjunction with the formatted Excel Practice reports.

The reports contain multiple rows per practice with a row for each formulation and quantity prescribed. To be able to view the information objectively it is necessary to filter some of the data fields. This can be easily achieved using the Excel AutoFilter option.

- Open the report in Excel
- Scroll down to the bottom of the worksheet and highlight the row containing the column totals.
- Press Delete to delete the totals so that they do not appear in the Auto-Filter lists
- Select any cell in the dataset and from the Excel toolbar select Data and Filter and Auto-Filter

AutoFilter applies drop-down filter lists to each of the columns.

To aid identification of unusually large quantities the Quantity field can be sorted in descending order.

- Select any cell in the Quantity column.
- Click on the Sort Descending button on the Excel toolbar

The worksheet displays all presentations in descending order of quantity.
Examining prescribing data

Examining practice prescribing

Use AutoFilter to select a practice identified from the CD practice reports as having a frequency of prescribing above the PCT average.

The data should be examined in detail to establish if prescribing is consistent with normal practice or if unusual prescribing patterns warrant further investigation.

Repeat the process for all other practices above the PCT average.

Examining prescribing by presentation

AutoFilter can be used to:

- Filter prescribing for an individual practice.
- Filter prescribing for individual formulations.
- Readily identify prescribing for items prescribed by nurses, pharmacists or dispensed as personally administered (PADM) or dispensed by instalments (MDA).
- Custom filters can be applied to identify groups of formulations for the same drug or only solid dose or liquid formulations.
- Multiple custom filters can be applied – for example, to identify quantities over a set value prescribed for certain drugs.

Unusual Formulations

- From the BNF Name drop-down view the presentations prescribed.
- To identify practices that have prescribed a particular formulation select a presentation from the list.

The worksheet is filtered to identify practices that have prescribed the selected formulation.
Filtering by types of presentation

Individual BNF presentations can be selected from the BNF name list.

To display groups of formulations of a drug the Custom option in AutoFilter can be used

For example to only display all methadone mixture formulations 1mg/ml (including S/F and C/F presentations):

- From the BNF drop down list select Custom

- From the Custom dialog box select begins with.

- In the filter box select the entry Methadone HCl_Mix 1mg/1ml.

- Click OK

The worksheet now lists all methadone mixture formulations.

The same technique can be used to exclude all liquid and injectable prescribing by excluding any entries that contain 'ml'.

- From the BNF name column select the AutoFilter option does not contain.
- In the filter box type ml.
- Click OK

The worksheet now excludes all liquid and injectable formulations. (Note that this may also exclude presentations that have the sequence of letters ‘ml’ in their name).
The ‘begins with’ filter option will group presentations that begin with a certain name.

For example to list all diamorphine presentations:

- From the BNF name column select the AutoFilter option **begins with**.
- In the filter box type **diamorph**.
- Click OK

Only diamorphine presentations are displayed.

**Tip**
If using this option, first view the full BNF list to see the naming convention used for presentations. For example, all diamorphine formulations begin with Diamorph HCl not Diamorphine.

If using the ‘begins with’ option be aware that you are filtering at BNF presentation level and therefore the filter will only be applied against presentations beginning with a set of characters, the results will exclude other brands of the same drug.

For example: Selecting begins with **morph** will return generic morphine sulphate formulations but exclude MST, Oramorph and Zomorph etc.
Filtering by Items type

Auto-filter can be used with other data fields to filter by:

- PADM (personally administered items)
- Nurse and Pharmacist prescribing items – if CDs are identified as having been prescribed by non-medical nurse or pharmacist prescribers’ further analysis may be required identify the prescriber(s).
- Prescribing by instalments on MDA forms

The list may contain 0 ((no items prescribed), 0 and 1 or a series of numbers (these relate to the number of items per presentation and individual quantity prescribed).

To filter by prescriptions for a specific items type:

**Example: To identify prescribing on FP10MDA forms**

- Select an Items data field.
- Select the AutoFilter option **is greater than**.
- In the filter box type **0**.
- Click **OK**

The worksheet only displays FP10MDA prescribing.

To filter by prescriptions not for a specific items type:

- From the filter list select **0**.

The worksheet only displays non FP10MDA prescribing.
Applying multiple filters

More than one filter can be applied at a time to fine tune the filter. Two examples are used as illustrations:

- Identifying large quantities of methadone mixture prescribed on non-MDA forms.
- Identifying practices prescribing more than 60 temazepam tablets on individual prescriptions.

**Identifying methadone mixture prescribing on non-MDA forms**

This will identify methadone mixture prescribed as single quantities. This will allow prescribing of large single quantities to be identified.

Filter the BNF name list to identify all methadone mixture formulations' using the option begins with as demonstrated previously.

- in the **Total Items FP10MDA** drop down list select **0**

In the example shown there 3 items were prescribed each for 4,200ml methadone mixture 1mg/ml prescribed and two each for 3,500ml.

You cannot readily identify CD prescribing greater than 30 days for analgesics, drugs used in substance dependence and CNS stimulants as dosages will vary widely. However, it is reasonable to assume that prescribing for temazepam tablets should not exceed 60 tablets per prescription.

Applying a filter to identify temazepam tablets and a custom filter in the quantity field to display quantities greater than 60 will identify practices that may not be conforming to the recommendation that the maximum quantity of Schedule 2, 3 and 4 CDs be limited to 30 days for prescriptions.

- In the BNF drop-down list select Custom
- In the Show rows drop-down list select begins with.
- In the second drop drop-down list select one of the Temazepam tablet entries and delete the strength so the selection is **Temazepam_tab**
- Select OK to apply the filter

Only temazepam tablet formulations are listed.

- In the **Quantity** drop-down list select Custom
- Select is greater than
- In the second box enter **60**
- Select OK to apply the filter
The spreadsheet only displays practices prescribing more than 60 temazepam 10mg or 20mg tablets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prescriber Name</th>
<th>Disp Name</th>
<th>40mg Temp. 10mg</th>
<th>40mg Temp. 20mg</th>
<th>Total IPR</th>
<th>Total IPR REX</th>
<th>Total All Practice</th>
<th>Total Practice REX</th>
<th>Total Brand DR</th>
<th>Total Brand IRX</th>
<th>Total Brand RX</th>
<th>Total Brand ERX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALTON ROAD CLINIC</td>
<td>Temazepam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Removing filters

To remove filters applied to columns either:

- Select a drop-down list and select All.

If multiple filters have been applied:

- From the Excel toolbar select Filter and Show All

If no unusual prescribing patterns are detected there is no need for any further action. If any unusual prescribing is highlighted proceed to the Prescriber Dispenser report section.
**Prescriber Dispenser Report**

This report should only be processed if areas of prescribing identified in the practice CD reports or detailed CD presentation reports give cause for concern.

The report returns detailed information and should only be processed against individual practices and selected BNF presentations. It **should not** be routinely applied against all practices and all CDs.

The report details by month:

- Prescriber name and code (the name of the prescriber on the prescription form, this may not be the prescriber that issued the prescription).
- Patient practice name and code – the practice the prescriber prescribed on behalf of.
- The same BNF information as provided in the Detailed CD Injections Presentation report.
- Dispenser information.
- Form number – in the prescription pricing process every form in a dispenser’s batch is assigned a form number. This identification code is used in the retrieval of prescriptions. **Note that this code is used in conjunction with the dispenser code and month. Other dispensers in the same month will have the same code.**

- Log into ePACT.net

### Selecting individual CDs

The CD system tags used in the previous reports are blind tags and cannot be expanded to display component presentations. Therefore, in order to select specific CD formulations the BNF Tag template report needs to be applied against the blind system tag to detail CD injections prescribed and the results applied to the data selector as a System session tag.

- Select the same period range you used for the previous reports.
- Retain the default PCT selection.
- From the BNF tag list select the appropriate system CD system tag.
- Select Reporting and open the **BNF Tag Template** report.
- Select **Run Now** to process the report.

The report displays all CD presentations prescribed in the PCT in the selected period. The results of the report can be applied directly to the BNF data selector using the System Session tag button.

- Click on the System session tag button to apply the results to the BNF data selector as a system session tag.
- Close the BNF Tag Template report.
Processing the Prescriber Dispenser report

Once the system session tag containing CDs has been applied to the data selector the Prescriber Dispenser Report can be run.

- Expand the PCT and select the practice you require information for.
- Expand the System Session Tag and select the presentation(s) you require information for.
- Select Reporting and select the Prescriber Dispenser Report from the template list.

The report applies a period tag for the latest 3 months tag to apply a limit to the amount of data you can return with the report. If you are only interested in a specific month the tag can be expanded and a date range selected.

**Important:**

Before saving the report results using snapshot examine the data to see if the results match those obtained from the Detailed CD Injections Presentation spreadsheet.

The Prescriber Dispenser report summarises at prescriber level and uses Practices Current Children as the default setting. If prescribing was from a prescriber who has retired, or is no longer at the practice, their prescribing will not be displayed in the Prescriber Dispenser Report. If this is the case follow the instructions overleaf to display results for all prescribers.

- Select Run Now to process the report.
If expected prescribing is not displayed in the Prescriber Dispenser Report

If prescribing for a practice was from a prescriber who is no longer a current prescriber any items identified in a detailed CD prescribing report will not be shown when prescribing is detailed at prescriber level in the Prescriber Dispenser report. Prescribing for the prescriber will be shown at practice level but, as they are no longer a practice prescriber, will not be available at prescriber level.

In the example shown below a prescription for 294 dexamfetamine 5mg tablets is shown as having been issued from a practice in the period July to October 2009.

When a Prescriber Dispenser report is processed for this presentation, practice and period the report did not return any records.

If this occurs:

- Freeze the report template.
- From the Organisation Tag list select Practices All Children.
- Expand the tag to select the Practice you wish to report for.
- Unfreeze the report.
- Reprocess the report

The report will now detail prescribing for both current and historic prescribers in the practice. In the example shown, the reason no prescribing was displayed when the Prescriber Dispenser report was processed using the defaults settings was that the prescriber left the practice in October 2009 and was therefore not listed as a practice prescriber in the current children view.
Applying filters to prescriber dispenser report data fields before processing

Data filters can be applied to certain ePACT.net data fields to reduce the amount of data that is returned in the report. For example, the detailed S2 CD report identified a practice that has prescribed large volumes of methadone mixture 1mg/ml on non-MDA forms with quantities up to 4,200ml. If the Prescriber Dispenser report is applied against the practice and methadone mixture it will return information for all methadone mixture prescribing for the practice.

To return only information for quantities greater than 4,000ml on individual prescriptions a filter is applied to the Prescriber Dispenser report Quantity field before processing.

- Right click on the Quantity data field and the filter dialog box is displayed.

- Change the filter option to is greater than

- Type in 4000 in the second box.

- Click OK to apply the filter which is now displayed on the template.

The report can then be processed in the normal way and will only show prescribing for quantities greater than 4,000ml.
**Examining the data in Excel**

- Open the report in Excel
- Scroll down to the bottom of the worksheet and highlight the row containing the column totals.
- Press *Delete* to delete the totals so that they do not appear in the Auto-Filter lists.
- Select any cell in the dataset and select **Data** and **Filter** and **Auto-Filter**

The worksheet contains a large number of columns detailing prescriber, dispenser and BNF information. The information should be studied by an experienced adviser to determine if any further investigation is required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prescriber</th>
<th>Dispenser</th>
<th>Formulation</th>
<th>BNF</th>
<th>Total Act</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Total Items</th>
<th>Total Items P/T</th>
<th>Total Items P/Q</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Form Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diamorphine HCl 10mg</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diamorphine HCl 10mg</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diamorphine HCl 10mg</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use AutoFilter if necessary to examine prescribing by formulation, prescriber of dispenser.

To examine if more than one CD formulation was prescribed on the same prescription form apply filters for dispenser code, form number and period name. As demonstrated in the example below showing a prescription form with prescribing for 10 ampoules each of Diamorphine 10mg, 30mg and 100mg injections.

If, after examination of the data, there is no cause for concern there is no need to proceed any further. If there are any concerns the next step would be to obtain a prescription search for dispensers and prescription form numbers identified in the report. The procedure for requesting a prescription search is covered in separate section of this guide.

- Save the workbook in Excel format.
Private CD Prescribing (PCT users only)

Private CD prescribing is accessed via the ePACT.net Monitor Prescribers system.

- Log into ePACT.net
- From the Information Service dialog box select **Monitor Prescribers**

The default view is FP10 prescribing. This allows users to view prescriber level NHS prescribing for all PCT prescribers. It shows prescribing by **prescriber** (not practice) for all PCTs the prescriber has prescribed on behalf of. For example, a nurse prescriber may be employed by more than one PCT. The normal ePACT.net system will show prescribing details for prescribing within the user’s PCT only but the Monitor system will show prescribing for all PCTs the nurse prescribed for.

Private CD prescribing can be accessed via **Options** on the toolbar.

- Select **Options** and **Private Controlled Drugs**

If this option is not shown contact the NHS Prescription Services Help Desk (0191 2035050) to request that it is added to your user profile.

- Expand the **PCT** to view prescribers (in the example shown prescriber names have been hidden).

**Active Prescribers report**

The prescriber list shows prescribers who have requested private CD prescription pads (FP10 PCDSS). Many prescribers have obtained private pads but have not prescribed. To see if there has been any prescribing use the **Active Prescribers Private** report

- Select a date period.
- Ensure that the PCT is expanded and all prescribers selected.

There is no need to apply any of the system BNF CD tags as only CD prescribing data held in the Monitor system.
Select Reporting. From the template list select Active Prescribers. Select Run Now to process the report.

If the report returns zero items there has been no private CD prescribing in the selected period and no further action is required.

- If the report lists prescribers there has been private CD prescribing in the PCT and this can be detailed using the Prescriber Dispenser Private report (in the example shown the prescriber name has been hidden).

To produce a detailed prescribing report for each active prescriber either manually select a prescriber in the data selector or, if there are a large number of prescribers, use the System Session Tag button on the Active Prescribers report to apply the report results to the data selector as a temporary tag.

- On the Active Prescribers report click on the System Session Tag button.

A dialog box prompts you to confirm that you wish to apply the tag.
- Click OK to confirm.

A second dialog box confirms the tag has been applied.
- Click OK to close the confirmation message.
Prescriber Dispenser Private Report (private)

- Expand the system session tag and select the practices.

As numbers of private CD items are much smaller in comparison to FP10 CD prescribing it is possible to use the Prescriber Dispenser report to extract full prescribing data by month, prescriber, BNF presentation and dispenser.

- Select Reporting.

- From the template list select the **Prescriber Dispenser Private report**.

- Select **Run Now** to process the report.

Using **Snapshot** save the report in Webpage **HTML only** format.

- Exit ePACT.net.

The saved report is opened in Excel and studied by a prescribing adviser. If no unusual prescribing is detected there is no need to proceed any further. If any of the prescribing causes concern a prescription search can be requested using the information contained in the Prescriber Dispenser Private report.
Monitoring prescribing in other CD Schedules

The techniques outlined in this manual concentrate on the monitoring of S2 and S3 CDs. However, it is recognised that drugs in other CD schedules may be subject to abuse or inappropriate prescribing. The existing techniques can be easily modified and applied against any drug or group of drugs.

Example: monitoring dihydrocodeine prescribing

- Use Search to create and save a tag for the drug(s) you wish to monitor (in this case dihydrocodeine).
- Select the S2 CD Practice report.
- From the BNF tag list select the tag you have created and apply using Show Selections to replace the S2 CD tag.
- Process the report and save the results.
- Select the Detailed S2 CD report.
- From the BNF tag list reapply your tag using Show Selections.
- Process the report and save the results.

The saved HTML files can be opened and analysed in Excel using the same methods as before.
Non-Medical CD Prescribing (PCT users only)

If any of the detailed S2 or S3 CD reports have values greater than zero in the nurse or pharmacist items fields additional analysis can be carried out to view detailed CD prescribing information by prescriber name. If the Total Nurse Items and Total Pharmacist Items fields are all zero there is no need to proceed any further.

Non-medical CD prescribing may have been carried out by practice based prescribers or PCT based prescribers and two sets of report templates have been included in both the Practice Current Prescribers and Non-practice Current Prescribers ePACT.net views.

Practice based non-medical CD prescribing

Two report templates are provided:

- Practice Non Med S2 Report
- Practice Non Med S3 Report

The example below illustrates the use of the Practice Non Med S2 Report. The technique for the S3 report is identical.

1. Log in to ePACT.net
2. Select a suitable date period.
3. Select Reporting and from the template list the Practice Non Med S2 report

The associated report applies the system Schedule 2 CD tag.

The report provides information at prescriber and BNF presentation levels for Practice Independent Nurse prescribers and Practice Pharmacist prescribers. The patient practice name data field identifies the practice the prescribers prescribed on behalf of.

1. Select Run Now to process the report.
2. Use Snapshot to save the report results in HTML format.
3. Repeat for the Practice Non Med S3 report
PCT Based Non-Medical Prescribers

These prescribers (community nurses, palliative care and mental health nurses etc) are employed by the PCT and prescribe for patients on behalf of the patients practice.

To access PCT non-medical prescribing CD reports users need to switch from the ePACT.net Practice prescribers view to the Non-Practice prescribers view.

- Ensure all report templates are closed.
- From the Organisation tag list select the Non-practice Prescribers Current Children tag
- Select a suitable date period.
- Select Reporting and from the template list the S2 CD report NPS

Process and save the data in the same way as the Practice Non Med S2 Report.

- Repeat for the S3 CD report NPS report

Open and analyse the non-medical CD reports in Excel.
Retrieving prescriptions from NHS Prescription Services (RxS)

Dispensed prescriptions are stored for up to 14 months by NHS RxS at various processing divisions. Prescriptions are stored in batches by dispenser, not prescriber, and prescriptions prescribed by practices within your PCT may have been dispensed by pharmacies outside your PCT and stored at more than one processing division.

Providing the dispenser code information, identified on the Prescriber Dispenser report, will speed up the retrieval process as your request can be directed to the relevant processing division(s).

To request the return of prescriptions:

1. Run the Prescriber Dispenser reports as described in the previous section to identify the prescriber name and code, dispenser code and form number which will aid the retrieval process.

2. Complete the prescription request form for Primary Care Trusts which can be found on the NHSBSA website.

3. Using the information contained in the Prescriber system Prescriber Dispenser report (Dispenser name and code, prescriber name and code and presentations prescribed and form number) the prescriptions can be retrieved and sent to you for examination.

Examining returned prescriptions

Returned prescriptions can be examined to identify:

- Patient details.
- The actual prescriber - the signature on the form.
- The validity of the prescription – does it appear to be forged or have had quantities altered?
- Accuracy of pricing – has there been a data input error at the processing division with incorrect capture of prescriber name, quantity prescribed or presentation name?

Important

If examination of the prescription form reveals a data capture error inform NHS RxS immediately. NHS RxS will investigate and advise you of the appropriate action they have taken. Note: NHS RxS can not adjust prescribing data.

It is therefore important that you keep a record of the processing discrepancy within your PCT to avoid false positives if prescribing for this practice is analysed in the future.
Frequently asked questions

Why is CD prescribing not monitored by a central agency?

In many cases high prescribing for controlled drugs will be justified for practices providing palliative care. The experience and local knowledge of prescribing advisers is essential in the monitoring technique to identify 'suspicious prescribing' that may warrant further investigation.

Why are templates not provided to monitor S4 and S5 CD prescribing?

To reduce the number of templates provided in the ePACT.net system, templates have been provided for CD injections, S2 and S3 CDs only. However, a section in the manual shows how existing templates can be applied against other CD schedules or for other drugs that may be subject to misuse.

Why do the detailed CD reports not summarise by month or provide individual prescriber names, dispenser information or prescription form numbers?

The techniques provided give a good balance of depth of information required to analyse CD prescribing and demand on the ePACT.net server. Adding prescriber, dispenser and form number information increases the demand on the ePACT.net server as far greater amounts of data need to be processed and downloaded.

Detailed prescriber dispenser information is only needed if you identify any areas of concern.