

## **Overloaded: a Quick Guide to Substance Misuse Sources**

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As the national drugs information charity, the DrugScope receives an increasing number of enquiries from GPs and other primary care professionals. Many of these enquirers are looking for assistance in keeping up to date with substance misuse treatment. This brief article aims to guide you to sources that will help you do just that.

### **Guidelines**

One of the great gifts of the online age is the ability to track down the most up-to-date editions of guidelines and regulations. However, it is important to remember that just because something is online does not mean it is recent – some websites continue to carry documents long after they have been superseded. As well as recommending SMMGP's resource library (<http://www.smmgp.org.uk/html/library.php>), we suggest people refer to the National Library for Health's Guidelines Finder (<http://www.library.nhs.uk/guidelinesfinder/>), the RCGP (<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/default.aspx?page=515>) and, of course, NICE (<http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=cg>). The Department of Health maintains useful policy and guidelines links at <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/SubstanceMisuse/fs/en> and, of course, the National Treatment Agency lists clinical guidelines on its website (<http://www.nta.nhs.uk/publications/clinical.htm>).

### **Core Texts**

New practitioners often ask us "What are the key books I should read?" We have tried to cover these in our reading list 'Substance misuse – selected references for primary care' (<http://www.drugscope.org.uk/wip/7/PDFS/primary.pdf>), one of a series of research guides. Of particular note are Beaumont's *Care of drug users in general practice: a harm reduction approach*, Ghodse's *Drugs and addictive behaviour* and Gerada's *RCGP guide to the management of substance misuse in primary care*. Later this year the new edition of the BMA's *Core collection of medical books and journals* will be published, to which we submitted a long list of substance use texts, and which we will highlight as soon as it is available.

### **Current Awareness**

The dawn of email and RSS (Really Simple Syndication) has led to a plethora of services that you can set up to arrive in your Inbox as soon as updates are available. Confused by the technology? There's a quick guide, with links to other non-technical guides on our blog (<http://drugscope.blogspot.com/2005/09/friday-focus-feeds-for-drugdata-update.html>), and Fran Wilkie has compiled a training workbook that will take you through setting up newsfeeds step-by-step. It's available as a Word document to download from <http://www.library.nhs.uk/forlibrarians/training/materials> under the title *RSS*.

Sadly, the NLH's RSS Directory (<http://www.library.nhs.uk/rss/directory>) does not yet contain a specialty for substance misuse, but we assume that the Social Care, Mental Health and Occupations>Doctors sections will expand quite quickly now the directory is live.

Feeds and email listings we find useful include: *Daily Dose* ([www.dailydose.net](http://www.dailydose.net)), a catchall of press items; *Drug Misuse Information Scotland Weekly Update* ([www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org](http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org)); *NTA Update* ([www.nta.nhs.uk](http://www.nta.nhs.uk)); and *SAMHSA NCADI* (<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov>), covering US publications (one of a range of SAMHSA email mailshots). Of course, we consolidate these and several more into our own blog, available to view at <http://drugscope.blogspot.com> or as a newsfeed (<http://drugscope.blogspot.com/atom.xml>), but if you want to receive information as soon as it is available, it might be worth signing up for these services yourself.

Google Alerts (<http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en>) is a service, currently available under BETA testing, which allows you to set up 'saved searches' which are then emailed to you regularly. We are working on one for substance misuse, although it is not available publicly yet – at the moment we cannot guarantee the accuracy or authority of the items returned by the search, as we are searching the entire web for a topic that is the subject of many 'cult' sites.

As well as the blog, we do offer a range of current awareness listings – in our journal *Druglink*, newsletter *Members' Briefing* (both subscription only) and in free bulletins available from the New Books and Reports section of our website ([http://www.drugscope.org.uk/library/librarysection/lib\\_results.asp?file=\wip\7\books.htm](http://www.drugscope.org.uk/library/librarysection/lib_results.asp?file=\wip\7\books.htm)). Items of specific interest to GPs are usually listed under the heading 'Health Profession' and we know that several practices find checking these lists once a month a good way to look out for new publications.

In the world of print, there are several journals we recommend for current awareness. As well as *Druglink* and *Network*, those published in the UK include *Drugs and Alcohol Today* (<http://www.pavpub.com/pavpub/journals/DAT/index.asp>), *Drink and Drug News* (<http://www.drinkanddrugs.net/drinkanddrugsnews.html>) and *Drug and Alcohol Findings* (<http://www.drugandalcoholfindings.org.uk/>).

Of course, in a short article it is impossible to cover everything, so if you have further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us (0870 774 3682 / [info@drugscope.org.uk](mailto:info@drugscope.org.uk)). As information professionals, we see our role as guiding our users through the mountains of information overload.