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<th>Title</th>
<th>Challenges in deprescribing for young chronic benzodiazepine patients</th>
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### BACKGROUND

- **50%** increase in benzodiazepine (BZD) misuse amongst European 15-16 year-olds, 2003 – 2011
- **3%** of young people misused BZDs in Ireland in 2011
- **7 days** of continuous BZD use can lead to dependence in children

**General Practitioners (GPs):** collaborate with patients to use BZDs appropriately

**Youth Counsellors (YCs):** can maturely reflect patient perspective in GP consultations

**RATIONALE:** Both observe patterns of behaviour of which the other might not be aware

### METHODS

- Local ethical committee approval obtained
- Semi-structured interviews occurred between June and December 2013

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<th>Interviewee Demographics</th>
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<td><strong>Profession</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Age (yrs)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Experience (yrs)</strong></td>
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### AIM: Describe the challenges of deprescribing BZDs for young chronic BZD patients in the community

### RESULTS

#### PATIENT FACTORS

**Patient threats**
"I'll go out of here and I'll have a seizure and it'll be on your head doctor" (GP03)

**Eliciting sympathy**
"...just tell him...you're feeling depressed or feeling suicidal, you can't sleep. Just tell him that and he'll...write you the script" (YC09)

**Doctor shopping**
"3 or 4 doctors...what we find here is that you'll have a gang, say 4 or 5 people like. They'll all have scripts" (YC09)

### MEDICATION FACTORS

**Legitimate use**
"...muscle relaxants in situations...like whiplash and torticollis, where they have acute muscle spasm" (GP07)

**Effective medication**
"...wish they didn't exist on the market...in many ways, they're too good" (GP01)

### PROFESSIONAL FACTORS

**Continuation from previous prescribers**
"...my other doctor gave me these and there was no problem and they were great and what are you talking about now" (GP07)

**Lack of alternatives**
"...in the real world of general practice the pressure on a general practitioner to prescribe is almost always driven...by the lack of alternative support therapies" (GP05)

### PRESSURE TO PRESCRIBE

- **Alternatives**
  "I think if there was a therapist within each practice, it might prevent the...high level of prescribing of benzos" (YC03)

- **Restrictions**
  "...make the availability of benzodiazepines...much harder" (GP02)

- **Patient education**
  "...datasheets need to be...simplistic not legalistic...this is a habit-forming drug...this drug will...work less every time you use it. Why not talk to your pharmacist or your doctor about it" (GP04)

### CONCLUSIONS

- GPs and YCs identified different factors about BZD use in young patients
- Reductions in BZD usage will only succeed through co-operation between all stakeholders including patients, the medical profession, regulators, and the government
- Further research should be conducted to assess the patient benefits and monetary benefits of BZD reduction interventions

### Acknowledgements: We would like to thank the Irish College of General Practitioners and the Cork Local Drugs Task Force for their assistance with recruitment.

### References available on request

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