

# Veterans' MATES

## An innovative approach to the safer use of antipsychotics in older patients

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Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Veterans' MATES



# What is Veterans' MATES?

- Provides patient specific feedback & educational material to GPs to improve medicine use for veterans
- Supported by educational brochures to veterans encouraging them to talk to their doctor & pharmacist
- Educational material to pharmacists



# Department of Veterans' Affairs claims data

- Treatment population of approximately 260,000 veterans; median age 80 years
- 120 million prescription records over 9 years
- 200 million Medicare and allied health records (GP visits, radiology, pathology etc)
- 6 million hospital records (public and private)



# New therapeutic topics are developed and sent every three months to approximately:

- 30,000 veterans
- 10,000 general practitioners
- 7,500 pharmacies & accredited pharmacists



# Therapeutic area selected

 **Medication-related problem analysis**

 **Module topic selected**

 **Patient specific feedback developed**

 **Module implementation**

 **Evaluation**



# Selection of module topics

The subject needs to be:

1. problematic in the veteran community of Australia;
2. specific to medication management or related to health service delivery;
3. amendable to change by the interventions employed by this project;
4. evaluable using the available data sets;
5. suitable for repeat messages over time; and
6. relevant to the National Health Priority Areas.





- To date 25 modules delivered
  - Disease specific: Diabetes, COPD, Heart failure,
  - Drug Specific: Wafarin, Clopidogrel, NSAIDs
  - Service delivery: Medicines Review, Care Planning
- Participation
  - 250,000 veterans
  - 25,000 doctors
  - 8,500 pharmacies & accredited pharmacists



# National Strategy for Quality Use of Medicines



- The primacy of consumers
- Partnership
- Consultative, collaborative, multi-disciplinary activity
- Support for existing activity
- System-based approaches



# Partnerships

- The Repatriation General Hospital; Daw Park
- The National Prescribing Service
- The Drug & Therapeutics Information Service (DATIS)
- The Australian Medicines Handbook
- Disciplines of General Practice & Public Health; University of Adelaide
- The Data Management & Analysis Centre (DMAC); University of Adelaide



# Antipsychotics in dementia

- Frequently used to treat the behavioural and psychological symptoms (BPSD) of dementia
- Limited efficacy for BPSD
- Serious adverse effects in the elderly
- Associated with increased risk of hip fracture, pneumonia and all cause mortality
- Not recommended as first line in patients with BPSD



# Antipsychotic use in veterans

- 21,000 veterans dispensed an antipsychotic medication in the last 4 months of 2004
  - Almost 6,000 using long term (12 months)
  - Average 9 antipsychotic prescriptions (12 months)
- Residential aged-care
  - Over one third with high care needs
  - One fifth with low care need
- Care planning
  - 31% living in the community, most commonly annual health assessment
  - 14% psychiatry consultation, 2% psychology service



# Aim

To improve the use of  
antipsychotics in the elderly  
veteran population



# Methods

- Patient-specific prescriber feedback for veterans aged 65 years and over dispensed at least two antipsychotic prescriptions in the 6 months December 2006 to May 2007 distributed to general practitioners (GPs)
- Tailored educational materials distributed to both GPs and pharmacists





# The supporting materials

- Therapeutic brief
  - Non pharmacological management & pharmacological management of BPSD
  - Benefits & risks of antipsychotics in BPSD
- Educational brochure
  - Managing behaviour change in dementia - A helpful guide for veterans and their carers



# Evaluation

- Time series trends between targeted veterans and a historical cohort
- Health outcomes
  - self controlled case series analyses
  - inferred using published trial data



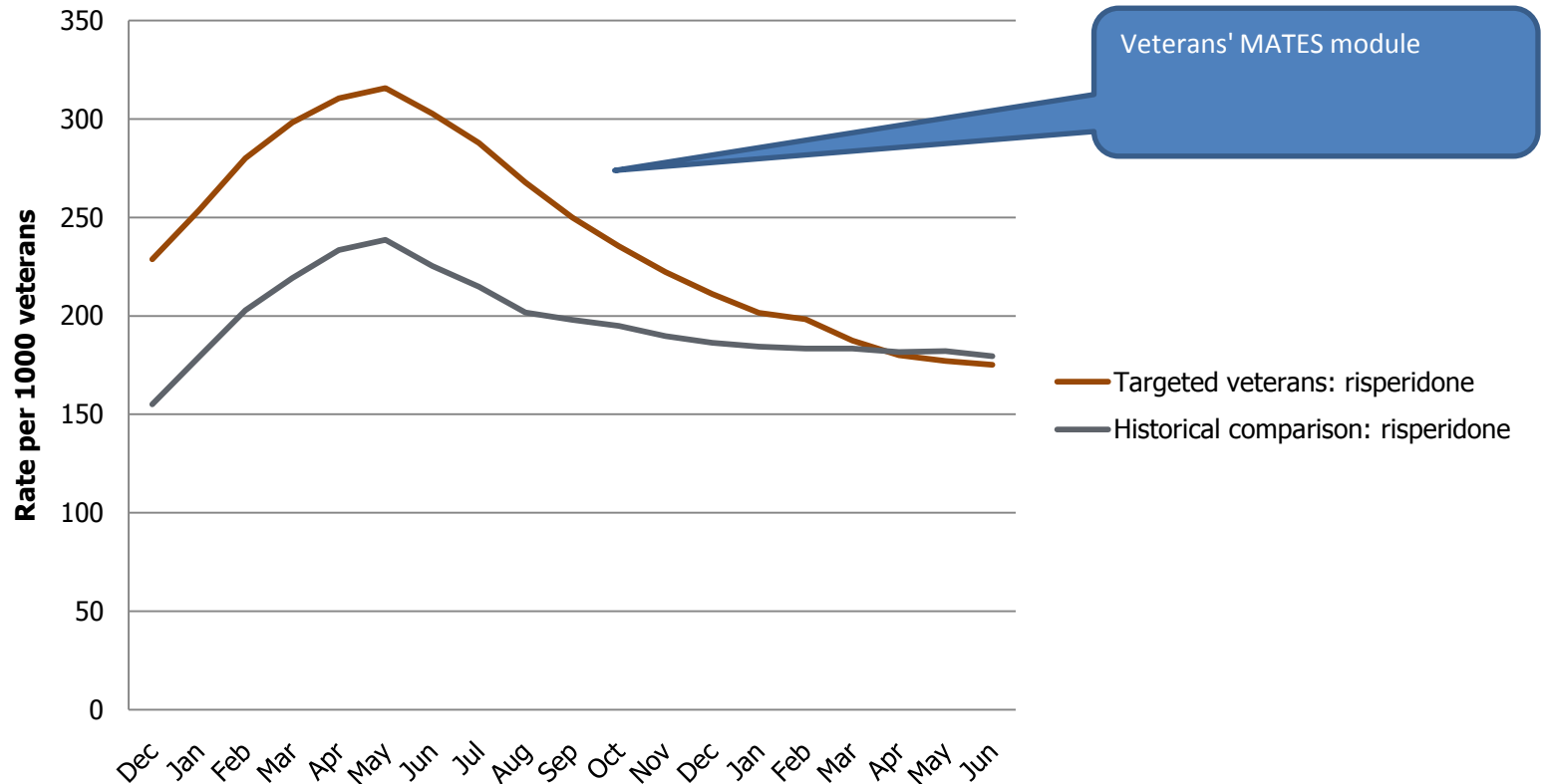
# Results

- Module 12 materials were mailed 25<sup>th</sup> September 2007
  - 3,884 GPs (about 6,990 of their veteran patients)
  - 8,085 pharmacies



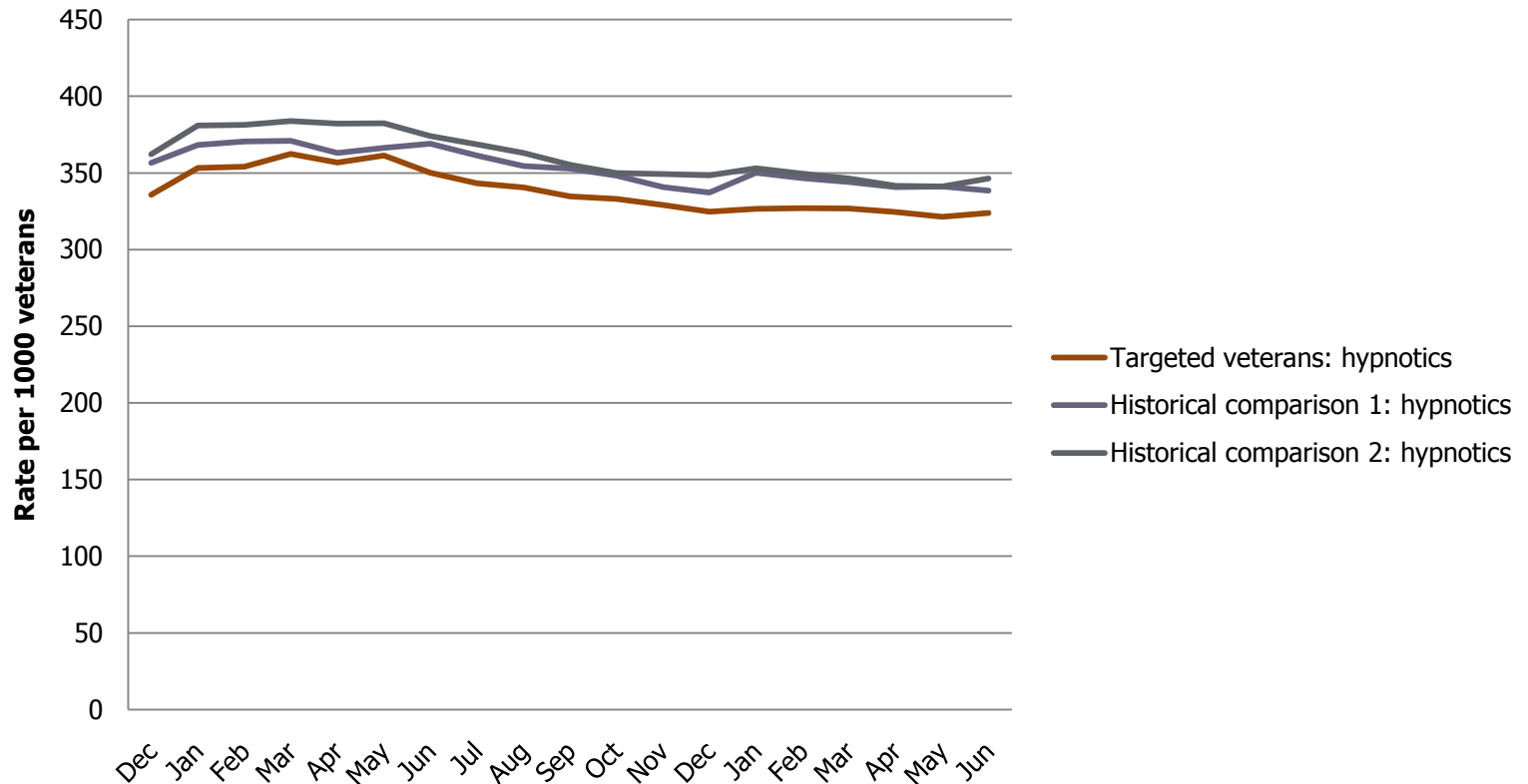
# Rate of veterans dispensed risperidone amongst veterans dispensed antipsychotics

(Dec 2006 – June 2008)



# Rate of veterans dispensed hypnotics amongst veterans dispensed antipsychotics

(Dec 2006 – June 2008)



	Monthly trend pre mail-out (Sep 05-Aug 07)	Change in use at the time of intervention (Sep 07 – Dec 07)	Monthly trend post mail-out compared to trend prior to the intervention (Jan 08 – Sep 09)
Risperidone use	RR 1.036 (1.034-1.039) p<0.0001 3.6% per month increase in rate of risperidone use	RR 0.857 (0.82 – 0.89) p<0.0001 14% fall in use of risperidone	RR 0.973 (0.970-0.977) p<0.0001 Compared to prior 3% decrease
Hypnotic use	RR 1.00 (0.99-1.001) p=0.16 Rate was stable	RR 0.999 (0.990-1.001) p =0.11 No change at time of intervention	RR 0.998 (0.997-0.998) p <0.0001 Rate now decreasing at a rate of 0.02% per month



# Adverse effects associated with atypical antipsychotics

	<b>Risk per 1000 dementia patients treated for 12 weeks</b>	<b>Events prevented as a result of Veterans' MATES mail out</b>
Hip fracture	25 per 1000 patients	27
Pneumonia	77 per 1000 patients	274
Cerebrovascular events	21 per 1000 patients	36
Death	13 per 1000 patients (63 per 1000 over 12 months)	22-108
Serious adverse events	38 – 95 per 1000 patients	66-164



# Conclusions



- Veterans' MATES is effective in promoting the safer use of antipsychotics in older patients through:
  - Patient-specific feedback and education to GPs
  - Educational materials to pharmacists
- Consultation, collaboration and a multidisciplinary approach is critical to Veterans' MATES success



[www.veteransmates.net.au](http://www.veteransmates.net.au)

