

Methadone for pain in palliative care: the development of an online CME training tool

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Rationale and objectives

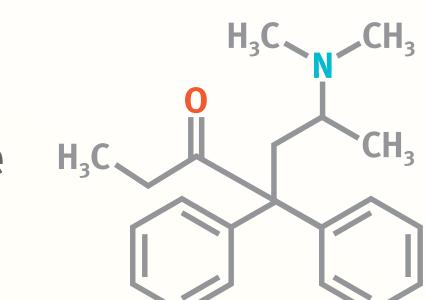
Knowledge gaps exist for the use of methadone as an analgesic. Our aim is to develop a 60-minute CME tool that will train physicians to be able to provide safe and effective pain relief to patients in palliative care settings.

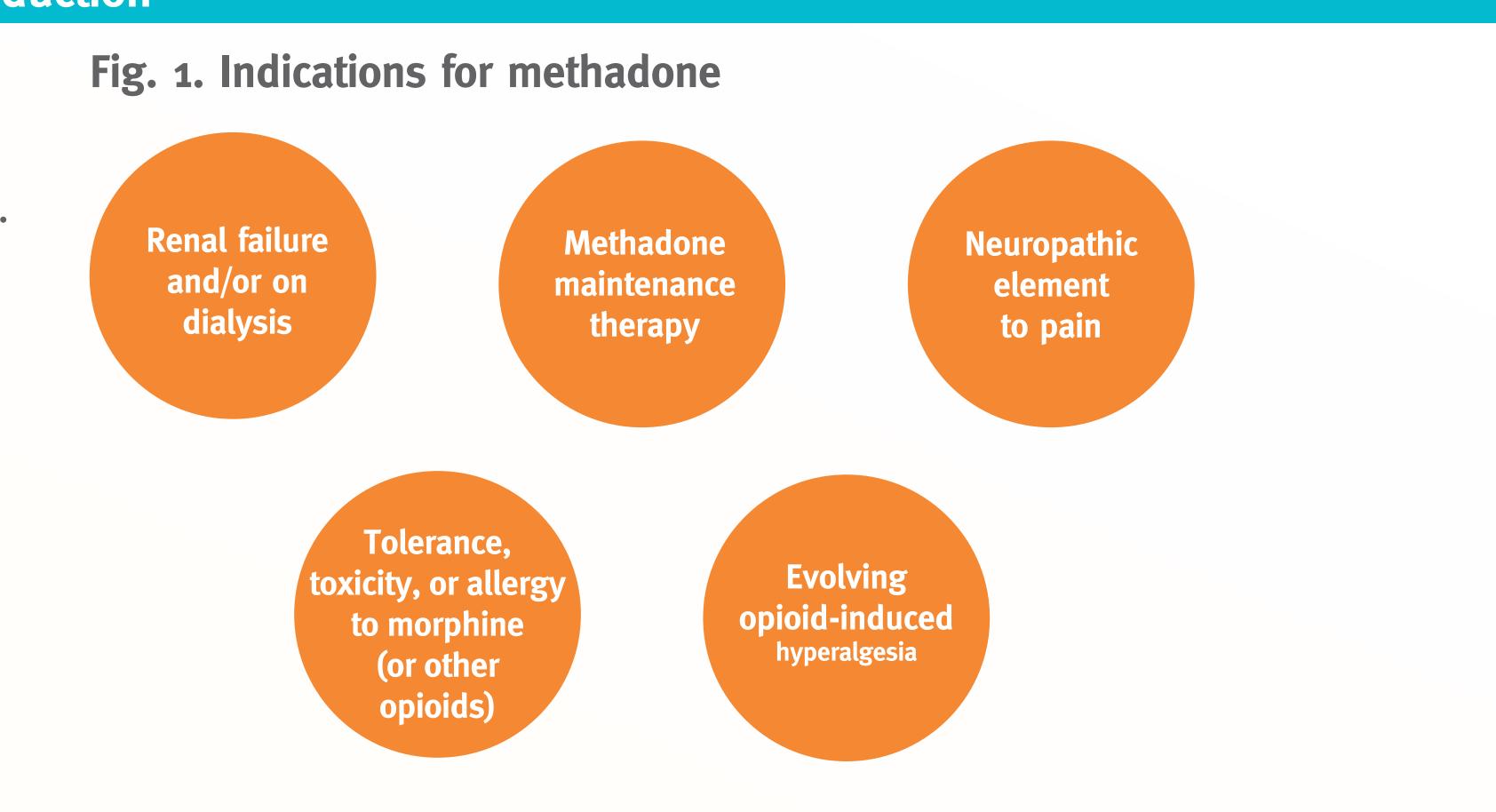
Introduction

- Methadone has been used as an analgesic since the 1940s and as treatment for opioid addiction since 1965.
- Current indications for analgesic use of methadone are shown in Fig. 1.
- The safe and effective use of methadone by experienced physicians may improve pain management; however, there is no widely accepted Canadian guidance on methadone use in palliative care.

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Chemical structure of methadone

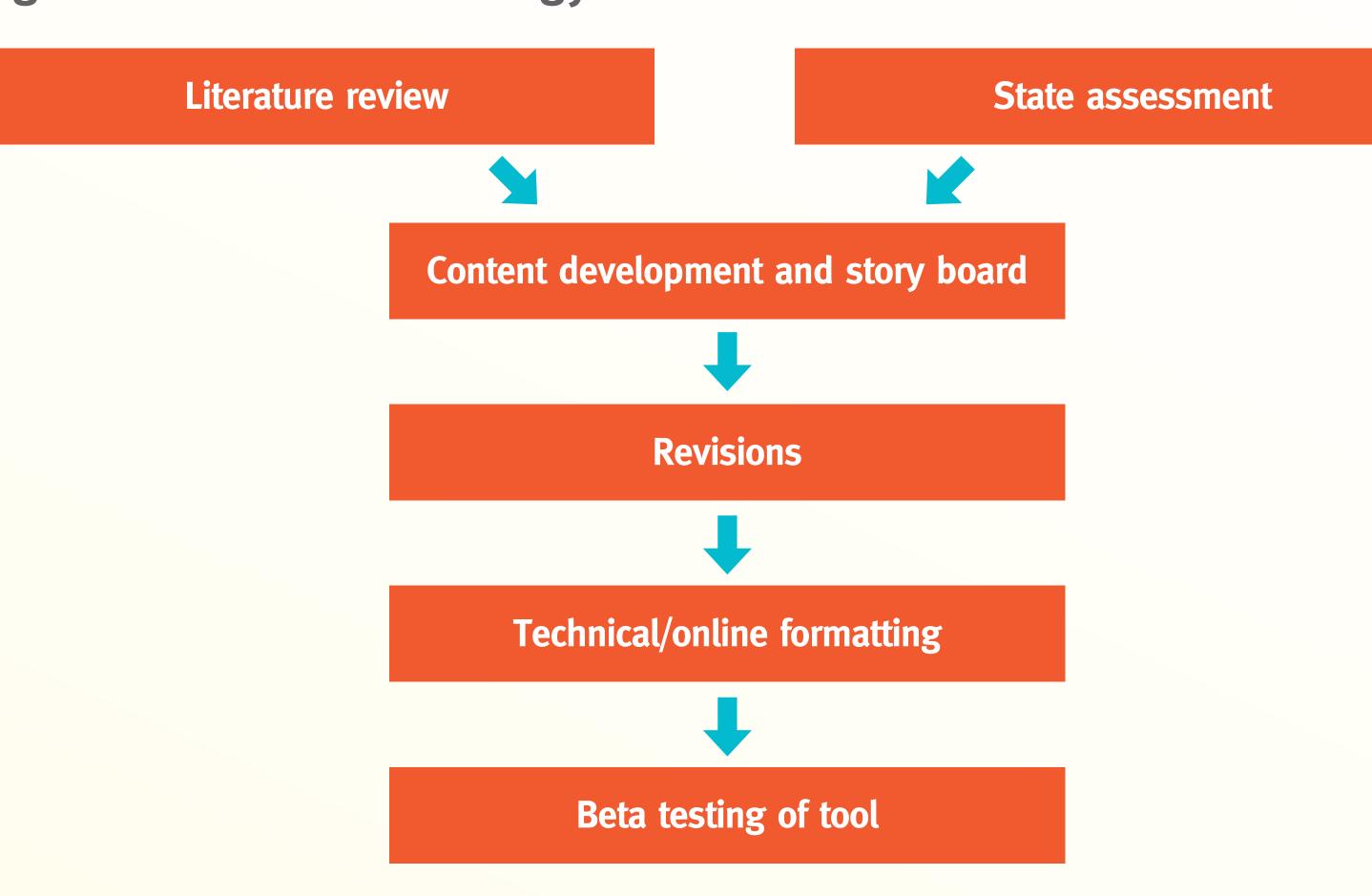




Methods

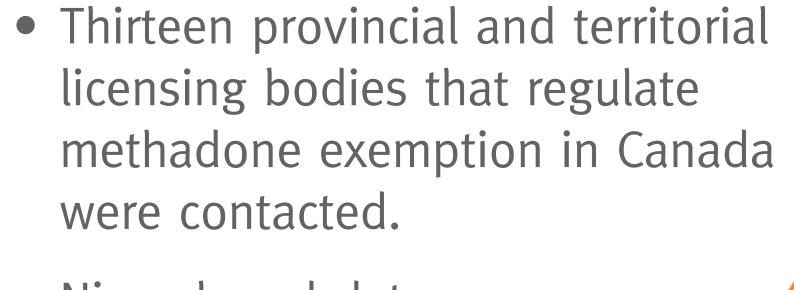
- A multidisciplinary team of healthcare providers, pharmacists and researchers met in early 2014 to create an action plan and discuss tool-development methodology.
- CME tool content was developed from the following data sources: a state assessment and literature review of peer-reviewed studies and reviews describing the use of methadone for analgesia published on Medline (PubMed) since January 1, 2004; shared documents at palliativedrugs.com referring to methadone for analgesia; an information request to Health Canada under the *Access to Information Act*; and an invitational form letter (and follow-up email) to all Canadian provincial/territorial licensing bodies for physicians and surgeons requesting procedural and training protocols for licensure of methadone for analgesia.

Fig. 2. CME tool methodology



Results

Figure 3. CME tool content

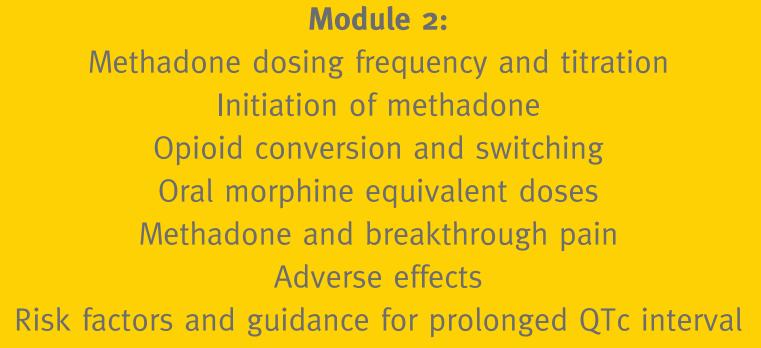


- Nine shared data on methadone exemption licensure, two acknowledged receipt but declined, and two did not respond.
- Recent numbers of methadone exemption licenses are shown in Table 1.
- Provinces that shared data on methadone
- Proposed CME training tool content is shown in Fig. 3.

Table 1. General methadone exemptions issued or denied in Canada from 2009-2013

Exemptions	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Issued	926	1130	861	1134	1054	5105
Denied	-	3	3	1	4	11





Methadone overdose/opioid-induced neurotoxicity

Module 3:

Methadone formulary in Canada

Patient education

Safe storage of methadone at home

Seeking specialist advice

Methadone and pediatric patients

Talking points

Case studies

Conclusions

- There is considerable nation-wide (and resource-limited) variability in procedure, training and guidance provided by provincial/territorial licensing bodies for methadone exemption.
- An approved CME training module that provides guidance for analgesic methadone in palliative care settings is warranted.

References

Health Canada, 2014. Data acquired under the *Access to Information Act* (file no. A-2014-00222/lr2), information issued July 15, 2014.

Further information

For more information on the CME training tool, or if you would like to participate in beta testing contact the Canadian Virtual Hospice at: info@virtualhospice.ca







