



CODEINE ADDICTION AND INTERNET FORUM USE AND SUPPORT

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Methods - Using a qualitative netnographic methodology, the social media forum Mumsnet was used with permission and searches were undertaken in 2016 of any posts that related to codeine and addiction. 95 relevant posts were identified and a random sample of 25 (posted between 2003 and 2016) was used to undertake subsequent 6-stage thematic analysis and development of emerging themes.

Theme	Subtheme
Context	- Beginning of codeine use
	- Plea for help
	- Anonymity and identity
	- Acquisition of codeine
	- Point of journey
Symptoms and -	Positive effects of codeine
Side Effects -	Negative effects of codeine
	Withdrawal side effects
Support-	Online support
	Seek professional help
	Where else to get help
Treatment-	How to withdraw
	Self-treatment or treatment services
	o Weaning
	o Cold turkey
	Personal experiences of withdrawal
	What is sought versus what helps
	Comparison to illicit drug users
Stigma and Shame -	Hiding the addiction from others
	Who is responsible for the addiction
Responsibility and -	Who allowed codeine to be prescribed
Blame-	Who allowed codeine to be dispensed
	Progress for the OP
Progress-	How other users have progressed

"My name is [name removed] and I'm an addict. I have an addiction, not to street drugs or booze. I don't even smoke. But I am beginning to slowly realise that I am addicted to painkillers

Background The use of codeine as an analgesic is well recognised but there are increasing concerns that for some individuals, continued use may lead to dependence, addiction and even deaths due to combination products. Research suggests that those affected may represent a hard to reach group who do not engage with formal treatment services. This study sought to explore the experiences of people with self-reported addiction to codeine and specifically, how social media forums may be used to communicate with others about this issue.

