

Newsletter Supplement

New Addition to Cost-Effective Choices List: Lamotrigine Dose Optimisation

Background

Lamotrigine (and the brand Lamictal®) tablets have recently been added to the [Cost-Effective Choices list](#) and will be included in COMPASS reports going forwards.

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet titled 'Cost Effective Choices List' with columns for Drug(s), Cost-Effective Choice(s) (CEC), and other details. A red circle highlights the entry for Lamotrigine, and a red arrow points from this entry to the text below.

Drug(s)	→	Cost-Effective Choice(s) (CEC)
Lamotrigine multiple tablets (e.g. 25mg x 4 tablets)* Lamictal® multiple tablets (e.g. 25mg x 4 tablets)*	→	Lamotrigine higher strength (e.g. 100mg x 1 tablet) Lamictal® higher strength (e.g. 100mg x 1 tablet)

*Strengths of 5mg, 25mg, 50mg, 100mg should all be checked for dose optimisation. Please refer to newsletter supplement for further details. **Note:** only switch patients who are stable on an established effective dose that controls seizures.

A switch to higher strength tablets is recommended when clinically appropriate for 3 reasons:

1. Maximising Safety

The Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) for generic lamotrigine tablets and branded Lamictal® tablets both recommend that the dose should be administered as the “lower number of whole tablets”. This reflects Medicines Governance advice (see [High Risk Medicines Poster “Rule of Three”](#)).

2. Cost Savings

Prescribing multiple lower strength tablets leads to significantly higher costs. This aims to release efficiencies in excess of £40,000 by March 2021. Two examples of the potential cost savings are shown in Table 1.

3. Patient Convenience

Patients can take a fewer number of tablets per day when the dose is optimised.

Please note this project is about dose optimisation and NOT generic switching. It is important that for Lamictal® tablets the intention is not misinterpreted as a generic switch or dose optimisation plus generic switch.

Table 1: Examples of Cost Savings

Drug	Cost per 28 days based on 100mg per day dose	Drug	Cost per 28 days	Potential Annual Savings per Patient
Lamotrigine 25mg dispersible x 4 tablets	£14.78	Lamotrigine 100mg dispersible x 1 tablet	£6.65	£105.69
Lamictal® 25mg x 4 tablets	£47.06	Lamictal® 100mg x 1 tablet	£34.52	£163.02

Actions to Maximise Lamotrigine Dose Optimisation

Actions for GP Practices

- Advise community pharmacists that the practice is identifying patients who may be suitable for dose optimisation and hence they may see changes on prescriptions.
- Practices are encouraged to review patients currently on multiple tablets of lamotrigine or Lamictal[®] and consider switching to the equivalent dose of higher strength tablets as detailed in table 2. Patients on strengths of 5mg, 25mg, 50mg or 100mg of lamotrigine or Lamictal[®] tablets should all have their medication checked for potential dose optimisation. **Only change patients that are stable on an established dose that controls their condition.**
- As part of this review, individual patients should be contacted before any change is made. Only when the patient has agreed and understands the change should their PMR be amended.
- A copy of the patient information [leaflet](#) will soon be available on the Patient Zone of the NI Formulary website (and on the Primary care intranet) should be printed, personalised and stapled to the next repeat prescription. This should be sent to the community pharmacy with a note asking them to discuss the change with the patient.

Actions for Community Pharmacists

Counsel patients on the change to their medication strength and dosing schedule. Ensure they understand that their total daily dose hasn't changed and they shouldn't experience any new side effects or deterioration in their condition.

Additional Information for GP Practices and Community Pharmacists

It is essential that the information regarding change in strength and change in number of tablets is accurately conveyed to the patient in order to avoid a medication incident.

Table 2: Examples of Lamotrigine (Lamictal[®]) Tablets Dose Optimisation

Current Strength and dose	New strength and dose
Lamotrigine 25mg x 2 tablets	Lamotrigine 50mg x 1 tablet
Lamotrigine 25mg x 4 tablets	Lamotrigine 100mg x 1 tablet
Lamotrigine 50mg x 2 tablets	Lamotrigine 100mg x 1 tablet
Lamotrigine 50mg x 4 tablets	Lamotrigine 200mg x 1 tablet
Lamotrigine 100mg x 2 tablets	Lamotrigine 200mg x 1 tablet
Lamotrigine 5mg dispersible x 5 tablets	Lamotrigine 25mg dispersible x 1 tablet
Lamotrigine 25mg dispersible x 4 tablets	Lamotrigine 100mg dispersible x 1 tablet

If you have any queries or require further information on the contents of this newsletter, please contact one of the Pharmacy Advisors in your local HSCB office:

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