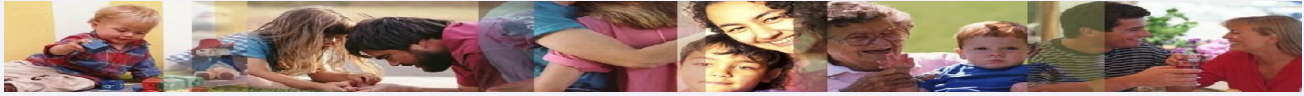


NEWSLETTER



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Legal obligations regarding monitoring and review of all CDs prescribed

A recent coroner's report has highlighted the need for GP practices to look at their processes for review of patients on repeat medicines, particularly controlled drugs (CDs).

In this case, a patient died as a result of a tramadol overdose. The patient was regularly prescribed tramadol each month, but was not taking the medication as intended, so had built up a supply. The senior Coroner noted *...inadequate supervision of prescribed (repeat) medication is...widespread* and that *'there is a risk that future deaths may occur unless action is taken'*.

This case is not alone. Adverse incidents have been previously reported where patients' repeat medicines were not reviewed by their GP for some years. These incidents led to serious repercussions, including patient harm and death, legal challenge and professional sanction.

Repeat prescribing, dispensing and patient review have been highlighted by the State Pathologist to the Coroner's Service, due to concerns about the amount of analgesics prescribed for a deceased patient. *"...in many such cases these patients have been receiving regularly and routinely, drugs on repeat prescriptions without having been reviewed, sometimes for periods of up to several years by their General Practitioner..."*

Action for GP practices:

- Review processes for clinical monitoring and repeat prescribing of CDs. Check that systems are in place to:
 - ⇒ identify potential excessive supply, e.g. patient not taking medication as expected, and manage concerns.
 - ⇒ ensure regular review of CDs in line with guidance – including assessment of ongoing need/benefit. This is particularly important for chronic pain where CDs have a limited role (see [NI Formulary](#)).

Legal obligations regarding prescribing and review of CDs are set out in [The Controlled Drugs \(Supervision of Management and Use\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#). For further details please refer to sections 6 and 7 of [HSCB Guidance for Managing Controlled Drugs for Prescribers in Primary Care](#).

Action for Community Pharmacies:

- Review / update SOPs relating to CDs and repeat dispensing to:
 - ⇒ Identify potentially excessive prescribing, e.g. too frequent prescriptions
 - ⇒ Ensure patients know how to take medication safely and what to do where a patient comments they are not taking medication as expected, e.g. contacting the prescriber
 - ⇒ Remind patients to return excess medication for destruction.

Flippin' Pain - Resources to help people manage their chronic pain

The Flippin Pain™ campaign (www.flippinpain.co.uk) provides a wealth of resources which aim to increase understanding of chronic pain among both patients and healthcare professionals, and improve the quality of life of those living with pain. These include videos, patient information leaflets, patient stories and podcasts.

Flippin' Pain™ recently hosted a Pain Science webinar for non-pain specialists where Professor Cormac Ryan gave a whistle-stop tour of campaign messages, including an expert panel Q&A discussion.

Actions:

- You can watch the Pain Science webinar at: www.flippinpain.co.uk/event/pain-science/
- Signpost patients to the Flippin' Pain™ website, to access free resources to help with chronic pain management.

New addition to Cost effective choices list: Nortriptyline 50mg tablets → 2 x 25mg tablets

The cost of nortriptyline 50mg tablets (generic) is significantly more than the 10mg or 25mg tablets. To meet daily dosage requirements, where appropriate, prescribers are asked to consider prescribing, e.g. 25mg tablets (and multiples thereof). Therefore, nortriptyline 50mg tablets to 2 x 25mg tablets has been added to the [Cost-Effective Choices list](#).

This may be of use particularly when considering step-down of dose following patient reviews.

Action for GP practices:

- Consider prescribing, where appropriate, 25mg tablets (and multiples thereof) and not 50mg tablets (bearing in mind the tablet burden for individual patients) to meet daily dosage requirements.
- Note the total daily dose to the prescription for clarity, e.g. nortriptyline 25mg take 2 tablets at night (50mg total daily dose).

Action for community pharmacy:

- Ensure the patient is aware of how many tablets they are to take.

Example NI Pricing Book Jan 2021

28 days' supply:

Nortriptyline 50mg tablets x28, 1 at night = £39.16

Nortriptyline 25mg tablets x56, 2 at night = £2.35

Annual saving approx: **£478 /patient**

Aquacel: Removal from NI Drug Tariff

The Aquacel products listed in the table are being removed from the NI Drug Tariff on 1st July 2021.

Prescriptions dispensed for these products after 1st July 2021 will **not be reimbursed by BSO**.

Aquacel Extra dressing and Aquacel Silver dressing will remain on the NI Tariff.

Aquacel Square	Aquacel Rectangle
5 x 5cm	4 x 10cm
10 x 10cm	4 x 20cm
15 x 15cm	4 x 30cm

Action for GP practices:

- Search for patients currently prescribed the dressings in the table; review clinical need, and if ongoing wound care is necessary, prescribe an alternative wound care product in accordance with the [Northern Ireland Wound Care Formulary](#).

NICE GUIDANCE — NI SERVICE NOTIFICATIONS

Service Notifications have been issued in Northern Ireland for the following:

NICE [TA689](#) — Acalabrutinib for treating chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

NICE [TA691](#) — Avelumab for untreated metastatic Merkel cell carcinoma (part review of TA517)

NICE [TA694](#) — Bempedoic acid with ezetimibe for treating primary hypercholesterolaemia or mixed dyslipidaemia

NICE [TA695](#) — Carfilzomib with dexamethasone and lenalidomide for previously treated multiple myeloma (part review of TA657)

The following are **NOT recommended**:

NICE [TA692](#) — Pembrolizumab for treating locally advanced or metastatic urothelial carcinoma after platinum-containing chemotherapy (review of TA519).

MANAGED ENTRY DECISIONS

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Doravirine + lamivudine + tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (Delstrigo [®]) | • Acalabrutinib (Calquence [®]) |
| • Doravirine (Pifeltro [®]) | • Nivolumab (Opdivo [®]) |
| • Ribociclib (Kisqali [®]) | • Pembrolizumab (Keytruda [®]) |
| • Anakinra (Kineret [®]) | • Andexanet alfa (Ondexxya [®]) |
| • Olaparib (Lynparza [®]) | |
| • Carfilzomib (Kyprolis [®]) | |

For full details see [Managed Entry section](#) of NI Formulary

This newsletter has been produced for GPs and pharmacists by the Regional Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team. If you have any queries or require further information on the contents of this newsletter, please contact one of the Pharmacy

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