

NEWSLETTER



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IN THE PRESS: NICE GUIDELINE ON ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP

One of the headlines that caught the eye of the Medicines Management Team in late August was '[GPs FACE AXE FOR HANDING OUT TOO MANY PILLS](#)' (Daily Mail, 17th August). It was one of a number of media sources that had seized on remarks made by Professor Mark Baker, clinical practice chief at NICE, in relation to new guidelines on antimicrobial stewardship and actions to encourage prudent antibiotic prescribing.



A more considered viewpoint would be that the NICE guidelines are designed to support and educate health professionals in the appropriate use of antibiotics, and provide advice on:

- Not prescribing for self-limiting conditions, or issuing a delayed prescription
- Discussing alternative options with patients
- Prescribing the shortest course of antibiotics
- Not putting antibiotics on repeat

The HSCB and PHA continue to work collaboratively in this area along with GPs and other primary care providers and will look to use the NICE guidance as a springboard in the coming months to improve antibiotic stewardship locally. Read the full NICE Guidance at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng15. An associated Public Health England Patient Safety Alert is available at: www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/psa-amr-stewardship-prog.pdf

Action for GPs and community pharmacists

- Practices are encouraged to consider addressing antibiotic prescribing. A number of support resources are available on the Primary Care intranet site such as [patient self-help leaflets / supporting resources for GPs](#) for managing patients with self-limiting infections.

REMINDER: TRAMADOL NOT ON REPEAT

Schedule 1, 2 and 3 controlled drugs cannot be prescribed on or dispensed against repeat dispensing prescriptions. Please note that tramadol (including Maxitram[®], Zamadol[®] and Zydol[®]) became a schedule 3 controlled drug in June 2014 with changes to the Misuse of Drugs Legislation Northern Ireland.



Action for GPs and community pharmacists

- Patients receiving tramadol on repeat dispensing should be identified, reviewed and tramadol then removed from repeat dispensing.
- If appropriate, a replacement 'stand-alone' prescription can be issued.
- Patients should be informed of the changes and the implications for obtaining future supplies.

REVIEW: NEBIVOLOL 2.5MG TABLETS

Bisoprolol is first line choice of beta blocker as per the [Northern Ireland formulary](#) and should be considered first line for all new patients, reserving nebivolol for when bisoprolol is not tolerated.

Prescribing data indicates that the number of prescriptions for nebivolol 2.5mg tablets has nearly doubled in the last two years. There is a significant price difference between nebivolol 2.5mg and 5mg tablets: **the cost of treating one patient for a year with nebivolol 2.5mg is nearly £1000, compared to £21 for nebivolol 5mg tablets.**

Over £2 million was spent in Northern Ireland last year in primary care on nebivolol 2.5mg tablets. We have the potential to make savings of over £1.5 million/year if the majority of these prescriptions could be switched to nebivolol 5mg with directions 'to take half a 5mg tablet' (note: nebivolol 5mg tablets are licensed to be divided in equal halves).

Action for practices

1. Search for all patients prescribed nebivolol 2.5mg in the last six months.
2. Consider a switch to nebivolol 5mg 'half a 5mg tablet' if this is appropriate (taking into consideration the manual dexterity of the patient).
3. Review could be added as an action for any prescribing action plans currently used for the NI Prescribing LES.
4. Add an alert message to the clinical system for nebivolol 2.5mg.
5. **Contact your MMA if you would like support to carry out this review.**



NEW NICE GUIDANCE

[NICE Guideline NG14](#) — Melanoma: assessment and management.

Service Notifications issued in Northern Ireland for the following:

[NICE TA 323](#) — Erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (epoetin and darbepoetin) for treating anaemia in people with cancer having chemotherapy (including review of TA 142)

[NICE TA 325](#) — Fluocinolone acetonide intravitreal implant for treating chronic diabetic macular oedema after an inadequate response to prior therapy (rapid review of technology appraisal guidance 271)

[NICE TA 326](#) — Imatinib for the adjuvant treatment of gastrointestinal stromal tumours

[NICE TA 327](#) — Dabigatran etexilate for the treatment and secondary prevention of deep vein thrombosis and/or pulmonary embolism

[NICE TA 329](#) — Infliximab, adalimumab and golimumab for treating moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis after the failure of conventional therapy (including a review of TA140 and TA262)

[NICE TA 330](#) — Sofosbuvir for treating chronic hepatitis C

[NICE TA 331](#) — Simeprevir in combination with peginterferon alfa and ribavirin for treating genotypes 1 and 4 chronic hepatitis C

[NICE TA 333](#) — Axitinib for treating advanced renal cell carcinoma after failure of prior systemic treatment

[NICE TA 335](#) — Rivaroxaban for preventing adverse outcomes after acute management of acute coronary syndrome

[NICE TA 336](#) — Empagliflozin in combination therapy for treating type 2 diabetes

[NICE TA 337](#) — Rifaximin for preventing episodes of overt hepatic encephalopathy.

MANAGED ENTRY DECISIONS

The following medicines were considered in September as part of the Northern Ireland Managed Entry process.

For details of the outcomes please refer to the Managed Entry section of the Northern Ireland Formulary website: <http://niformulary.hscni.net/ManagedEntry/MEDecisions/Pages/default.aspx>

Primary and Secondary Care

- Edoxaban (Lixiana[®])
- Tiotropium solution for inhalation (Spiriva[®] Respimat[®])

Secondary Care

- Aflibercept (Eylea[®])
- Dexamethasone (Ozurdex[®])

- Everolimus (Certican[®])
- Nintedanib (Vargatef[®])
- Paclitaxel, albumin-bound (Abraxane[®])
- Palonosetron (Aloxi[®])
- Secukinumab (Cosentyx[®])
- Tedizolid phosphate (Sivextro[®])

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 Medicines Management pharmacists in your local HSCB office.

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References

- 1) NICE. NICE Guidance NG15 Antimicrobial stewardship: systems and processes for effective antimicrobial medicine use, 2015. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng15>
- 2) BSO. NI Drug Tariff, Sep 2015. <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2034.htm>
- 3) HSCB. NI Formulary <http://niformulary.hscni.net/Pages/default.aspx>
- 4) EMC. Nebilet 5mg tablets SPC. Last Updated on eMC 10-Feb-2015. <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/9145>

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