

Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

Issue: 79

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Safety guidance

1. MHRA: Valproate: reminder of current Pregnancy Prevention Programme requirements; information on new safety measures to be introduced in the coming months [link](#)

Following a new safety review conducted in light of concerns that the current regulatory requirements for safe use are not being consistently followed, the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) has advised that there should be greater scrutiny of the way valproate is prescribed and that further risk minimisation measures are required.

The CHM recommends that:

- No patients (male or female) under the age of 55 years should be initiated on valproate (for any indication) unless TWO specialists independently consider and document that there is no other effective or tolerated treatment.
- For patients under 55 years currently receiving valproate, TWO specialists should independently consider and document that there is no other effective or tolerated treatment or the risks do not apply.

These new measures will be implemented over the coming months. In the meantime, GPs and pharmacists should continue to provide repeat prescriptions for valproate whilst adhering to the current Valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme, [LINK](#), ensuring patients receive the patient card, patient information leaflet and packaging bearing pregnancy warnings.

2. Reminder: Importance of recording hospital prescribed medicines (such as clozapine) on GP prescribing systems [LINK](#)

There are some drugs on the local Formulary that are categorised as “red” drugs and should only be prescribed by hospitals. Previous safety advice has highlighted the importance of getting such “hospital only” medications documented on GP clinical systems, so that they show on Summary Care Records (SCR). Advice on how to do this correctly can be found via the link above. This is not the same as adding a drug to the “repeat” list of medications and differs depending on prescribing system.

Clozapine is one such example and not having this clearly noted on SCRs may have detrimental effects when a patient is admitted to an acute hospital for a medical condition and staff are not aware of the clozapine prescribing.

NHS Southern Health Foundation Trust use a template clozapine notification letter for GP practices, which also contains advice on clozapine side effects as well as instructions on correctly adding it to clinical systems. Please ensure these letters are actioned accordingly.

The trust also reports similar issues could arise when antipsychotic depot medications have not been recorded appropriately on GP clinical systems and get missed whilst a patient is receiving medical care in another hospital setting.

ICB guidance

COPD Management and prescribing guideline [link](#)

The local COPD guidelines have been updated for the ICB-wide area, including referral details.

National guidance

1. UKHSA guidance on the management of scabies cases and outbreaks in long-term care facilities and other closed settings [LINK](#)

This national guidance has been developed to aid UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) health protection teams (HPTs) and others involved in the management and control of scabies cases and outbreaks in long-term care facilities and other closed settings.

2. UKHSA Updated malaria prevention guidelines for travellers from the UK [LINK](#)

This updated guideline notes that as international travel recovers further, the need to ensure protection against malaria for all those potentially exposed remains greater than ever. Clinicians are reminded to be vigilant and consider malaria in travellers unwell after returning from a malaria risk country, especially with a fever or flu-like symptoms.

Other

SPS: Assessing the impact of renal impairment on medicines safety in adults [LINK](#)

This article, by Specialist Pharmacy Services,(SPS) provides advice on the considerations needed to assess renal function and ensure the safe use of medicines in the context of preserving kidney function. It advises on points to consider when undertaking medication reviews in people with kidney disorders.

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Previous bulletins can be found at: <https://www.hantsiowhealthandcare.org.uk/your-health/medicines-optimisation/information-health-care-professionals/hiow-medicines-optimisation-bulletins>