



- **Errors occurring Involving “medication patches”**

The MHRA are concerned that a significant number of patients continue to suffer harm due to errors occurring involving “medication patches” e.g. rivastigmine, fentanyl and buprenorphine. The main themes are:

- Multiple patch application; of particular risk in settings where patients are reliant on healthcare staff or caregivers to remove and apply patches. Patients and caregivers should be given clear instructions on the frequency of patch removal and renewal, and appropriate areas for application. They should be encouraged to keep a record of when the patch was removed and when it was replaced and/or writing the day of the week or date on the patch with a thin ball point pen. Robust systems should be in place in healthcare settings e.g. care homes and hospitals, to ensure correct application of patches at the scheduled time. Pharmacy dispensing labels should make the frequency of patch removal and renewal clear e.g. “Apply ONE patch every TWENTY-FOUR hours. Remove and discard old patch before applying a new patch to a different location.”
- ‘Look-a-like’ and ‘sound-a-like’ errors - the continued patient safety incidents may be further compounded by the number of new preparations that have become available in recent years. In particular confusion between rivastigmine and rotigotine patches have occurred.
- Wrong strength – Ensure the correct strength of patches is prescribed or dispensed, potentially resulting in adverse events. This is a particular issue with buprenorphine as “lower dose” 7 day patches e.g. Sevodyne, Reletrans, Butrans, Butec and “higher dose” 3-4 day patches e.g. Transtec (96 hrs), Bupeaze (96 hrs) and Hapoctasin (72 hrs) are available.

- **Ranitidine liquid formulations for children**

There are no oral ranitidine formulations licensed for use in children under 3 years. If ranitidine is required for a baby or young child, the liquid ranitidine formulation recommended by specialist tertiary centres such as Great Ormond Street Hospital and Alder Hey is the licensed 75mg/5ml preparation. Whilst one of the excipients in this product is alcohol, the alcohol content in a typical dose for a baby is tiny. Small doses should be administered using a 1ml oral syringe.

- **Supplies of Sacubitril/Valsartan (Entresto)**

There have been reports of supply shortages of Sacubitril/Valsartan (Entresto). Novartis has confirmed that they have ample supplies and shortages have arisen due to wholesalers ordering insufficient stock to meet demand. This situation is likely to resolve in the near future but if pharmacies or dispensing doctors have difficulty sourcing supplies they can phone Novartis directly on 0845 7419442 and Novartis will supply directly.

- **New email address for reporting GP medicines concerns NGH**

There is now a dedicated email address that GPs can use to report concerns about prescribing to NGH and a prescribing feedback form has been added to Pathfinder. <http://nww.pathfinder-rf.northants.nhs.uk/nene/therapeutics/gp-concerns-feedback-forms/>. Other concerns in connection with NGH should be raised with locality managers in the first instance. Reporting arrangements for other providers are unchanged <http://nww.pathfinder-rf.northants.nhs.uk/nene/therapeutics/gp-concerns-feedback-forms/>

- **Reporting Harms from Illicit Drugs**

New psychoactive substances (previously known as ‘legal highs’) pose potentially serious risks to public health and hospital admissions associated with their use have increased by 44% between 2009-10 and 2014-15. A pilot reporting website, the Report Illicit Drug Reaction form <https://report-illicit-drug-reaction.phe.gov.uk/>, will be available for 1 year for healthcare professionals, including GPs who come into contact with patients experiencing harm associated with use of illicit drugs, particularly new psychoactive substances. The pilot aims to better collect data on harms from illicit drug use, to support provision of clinical guidance to professionals. The reporting forms are similar to those used for ‘Yellow Card’ reporting.

This edition is also available on PathfinderRF via the following link

<http://nww.pathfinder-rf.northants.nhs.uk/nene>

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