



Tablet Press



The prescribing newsletter for GPs, nurses and pharmacists
NHS Nene CCG and NHS Corby CCG

Issue 115

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- **Northamptonshire Glaucoma Prescribing Guidelines**

Countywide Glaucoma Prescribing Guidelines have recently been ratified at NPAG. It has been agreed that generic latanoprost is the first-line choice so GPs should expect to see this recommended for the majority of patients at initiation of treatment. Previously Northamptonshire has been an extreme outlier compared to national, with very low use of generic latanoprost and hence current costs for glaucoma treatment are far in excess of those expected; it is hoped that the new agreement will change this position over time.

Any existing patients prescribed branded Xalatan or Xalacom can be switched to the generic equivalent, provided that they have not previously had any problems with the generic version.

http://nww.pathfinder-rf.northants.nhs.uk/media/3416903/glaucoma_prescribing_guidelines_dec2015.pdf

- **Potential adverse events with nitrofurantoin**

Nitrofurantoin, even at low doses, can on rare occasions, both acutely and chronically, cause very serious pulmonary and hepatic toxicity and peripheral neuropathy. Acute pulmonary reactions typically have hypersensitivity-type features and usually affect women aged 40-50 years whereas chronic pulmonary toxicity typically involve older persons who have taken it for six months or longer. It is recommended that patients on long-term (prophylactic) nitrofurantoin are reviewed and if it is considered appropriate that treatment is continued, that they have their spirometry checked and LFTs checked every 3-6 months.

- **Genuair devices**

Last month we mentioned that some defective Genuair devices had been reported. Since then we have received advice from the team who developed the Genuair inhaler, who have highlighted the following:

- ✓ Prior to inhalation, the patient should breathe out to empty their lungs, ensuring that they breathe out away from the inhaler (rather than into it which may potentially introduce moisture)
- ✓ During inhalation, the patient should continue to inhale until a full breath has been taken. During the inhalation, the Genuair device will 'click' and the coloured window will change from green to red – this indicates to the patient that they are generating a suitable inspiratory flow but should not be taken as a cue to stop inhaling.

In addition, we have had reports of a few patients keeping their finger on the button after loading – which can jam the dose release.

Ensuring that patients are mindful of these factors will help to ensure that a patient receives the full dose of powder from the metered dose in the inhaler. Consistent incorrect use may potentially lead to the inhaler not functioning as intended.

- **GMC Guidance for doctors treating transgender patients**

The GMC has issued this guidance which applies the principles of good medical practice (including consent, confidentiality and prescribing medicines and devices) to transgender patients and explains doctors' duties under the Equality Act 2010 and other legislation http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/28851.asp

- **Ezetimibe in Acute Coronary Syndrome**

Ezetimibe is now licensed to reduce the risk of cardiovascular events in patients with coronary heart disease (CHD) following results of the IMPROVE-IT study. However it is suggested (see link to NICE Medicines Evidence Commentary below) that the additional benefits of adding ezetimibe to simvastatin 20mg that were seen in this study, were solely due to ezetimibe further reducing LDL cholesterol levels i.e. ezetimibe is not uniquely beneficial. The first line treatment option recommended by NICE for ACS patients in its lipid modification guidance is atorvastatin 80mg. <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/document?ci=http://www.medicinesresources.nhs.uk/GetDocument.aspx/pagelId/799007>

- **Aciclovir eye ointment stock availability**

Aciclovir eye ointment is likely to be unavailable until at least May 2016. In the meantime ganciclovir eye ointment can be prescribed as an alternative (in both primary and secondary care).

- **DH Guidance on emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools**

Following a couple of recent enquiries it may be worth a reminder that from 1st October 2014 the Human Medicines Regulations 2014 has allowed schools to buy salbutamol inhalers, without a prescription, for use in emergencies https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416468/emergency_inhalers_in_schools.pdf

This edition is also available on PathfinderRF via the following link <http://nww.pathfinder-rf.northants.nhs.uk/nene> and on the Nene CCG and Corby CCG websites

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