



# Medicines Optimisation Update

**Issue six: March 2018**

Welcome to the sixth edition of the BNSSG Medicines Optimisation Newsletter. This joint newsletter will be published monthly and will contain useful information and resources to help ensure that medicines continue to be prescribed both safely and effectively for our local population.

## Relative costs of Novel Oral Anticoagulants (NOACs)

The following NOACs are approved on the BNSSG formulary: Apixaban, Rivaroxaban, Dabigatran and Edoxaban. These are all TLS green for prophylaxis of stroke in AF and TLS amber 1 month for treatment of DVT/PE. The relative cost of one month's supply of each of these for full dosing in AF is shown below:

Drug	Dose	Cost/28 days	Cost/year
Dabigatran	150mg BD	£51 (30 days)	£620.50
Rivaroxaban	20mg OD	£50.40	£657
Apixaban	5mg BD	£53.20	£693.50
Edoxaban	60mg BD	£49	£638.75

## Gluten free consultation - Bristol

If you haven't already responded, we would like to hear your views on the Bristol CCG proposal to remove gluten free food from prescription for over 18s (NS and SG consulted previously on this). The online survey will be open until the 15<sup>th</sup> of April and can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2EKKUsi> Bristol CCG is proposing to:

- Remove gluten free products from the list of prescriptions for patients aged 18 years and over
- Allow GPs to retain their clinical discretion to deviate from this if felt necessary.
- Allow a limited list of gluten free products to be prescribed for patients under the age of 18 years.

## Urine Culture and Sensitivities

For all urine samples now sent to the Bristol Lab for culture and sensitivity testing, reporting the sensitivity to Pivmecillinam in line with the BNSSG community antibiotic guidelines for UTIs will be included. (Weston hospital have been reporting this sensitivity for some time). In full, sensitivities to Trimethoprim, Gentamicin, Nitrofurantoin and Pivmecillinam will be reported. Sensitivities to co-amoxiclav, ciprofloxacin and cephalixin are also tested but these will not be reported unless requested. If an upper UTI/pyelonephritis is suspected please ensure that this is stated on the culture and sensitivity request.

## Glucodrate withdrawal

Glucodrate, the licensed oral rehydration product which replaced unlicensed electrolyte solutions for short bowel syndromes, is being withdrawn by the manufacturer. UHB and NBT are reverting to using UHB solution and St Marks solution respectively. GPs should go back to prescribing the constituent ingredients of these solutions, as per the leaflets attached, rather than expensive unlicensed specials. UHB and NBT patient information leaflets about this can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2DEdppl>

### **Stoma guidelines**

Please be aware of the Adult prescribing guidelines: Ostomy appliances and accessories which are available on BNSSG formulary website (<http://bit.ly/2ID9fBZ>). These guidelines highlight and recommend the most high quality and cost effective stoma products available to prescribe along with advice on average monthly usage for each product.

### EMIS web Creatinine Clearance calculator

EMIS web has updated its creatinine clearance (CrCl) calculator to routinely use Ideal Body Weight which is known to underestimate renal function in obese patients. When being used to calculate drug doses this may lead to inappropriate dose reductions which may compromise the efficacy of a drug e.g. with NOACs. It is recommended therefore to use an external validated calculator, such as [mdcalc.com](http://mdcalc.com) for dosing drugs requiring CrCl.

### MHRA drug safety updates <http://bit.ly/2pn9kBM>

Updated contraception advice for male patients. Mycophenolate mofetil and mycophenolic acid, both used to prevent transplant rejection, are teratogenic and genotoxic. The available clinical evidence does not indicate an increased risk of malformations or miscarriage in pregnancies where the father was taking mycophenolate medicines, but there is insufficient evidence to rule out any risk. As a precautionary measure for male patients, it is now recommended that either the patient or their female partner use reliable contraception during treatment with mycophenolate medicines and for at least 90 days after stopping. Female patients of childbearing potential receiving mycophenolate should always use contraception.

### Inhaler recall alert

GlaxoSmithKline has issued a patient level recall for Ventolin Accuhaler 200mcg/60 dose and a pharmacy level recall for Seretide Accuhaler 50/250mg/60 dose due to a small number of the devices not delivering the full number of doses in the device. The inhaler recall letter can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2G3RMnE>

### EMIS drug interaction alerts: senna and salbutamol increasing the risk of torsade de pointes

The following memo on Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) <http://bit.ly/2FLiNwJ> for prescribers and pharmacy staff has been produced in response to questions from primary care prescribers and pharmacists concerned about seemingly innocuous drug combinations being flagged up as high risk on prescribing systems. Particular examples are:

- Salbutamol inhaler + clarithromycin
- Senna tablets + citalopram

These combinations have been prescribed uneventfully for many years but computer systems are now flagging them as "high risk alert - risk of torsade de pointes". The nature of the interaction is hypokalaemia being a risk factor for torsade de pointes. Salbutamol and senna are listed in the BNF as causing hypokalaemia; clarithromycin and citalopram are listed in the BNF as causing QT prolongation.

### Osteoporosis prescribing guidelines

Please be aware of the new BNSSG guidelines for Osteoporosis: oral treatment duration, drug holidays and denosumab, which are now available on BNSSG Formulary website: <http://bit.ly/2pnTGVV>

### LimbO waterproof cover products

In line with secondary care advice, prescribers are reminded that they should not prescribe LimbO/seal tight covers for PICC lines or broken limbs, as patients are advised to purchase these if they wish to. They are not routinely recommended by secondary care as necessary to prevent infection. LimbO guidance can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2GFOa97>

### Ribena sugar content

From February 2018, the sugar content of Ribena Blackcurrant (Ready To Drink and squash) will be reduced by approximately 55%. Anyone using Ribena Blackcurrant to treat hypos is therefore advised to find alternative approaches. The BCH hypoglycaemia patient leaflet can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2HOVJtM>

### **Prescribing in dry eyes**

Vita-POS is a liquid paraffin and vitamin A eye ointment which was approved for inclusion on the BNSSG Joint Formulary in October as a joint first line eye ointment for dry eyes along with Lacri-lube. Unlike other eye ointments, Vita-POS has a six month open shelf life and if used once at night, a single tube can last up to 5 months. A significant cost saving could be generated if patients are prescribed vita-POS instead of Lacri-lube. Please do not routinely prescribe simple eye ointment as this is currently a significantly more costly option.