



Tablet Press

The prescribing newsletter for GPs, nurses and pharmacists in
Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust



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- **Prescribing Incentive Scheme**

Details of the 2007-8 scheme have been sent to all GP practices and pharmacies and the scheme starts from 1st April.

- **The TORCH study of Seretide in COPD**

GSK are heavily promoting this recently published trial as having “positive results” for total mortality – see link below. However, prescribers should be aware that the study had a p value of 0.096 for the primary outcome i.e. this result is not statistically significant.

<http://www.gsk.com/ControllerServlet?appld=4&pageld=402&newsid=984>

Prescribers should be aware of this fact when faced with GSK promotional material based on the TORCH study and challenge the fact that, using common statistical convention, it is quite likely that the result occurred by chance and that this trial therefore tells us nothing.

- **Prescribing of drugs to treat TB**

In order to try to improve compliance, **all** prescribing and dispensing of drugs to treat TB will take place in secondary care. This has been the case for some time in the South of the county but will also apply in the North from April 1st 2007. Funding has been transferred to secondary care for this so GPs should not be required to take on prescribing.

- **Antihistamines for urticaria**

The recent focus on antihistamines for hayfever has also raised the question about whether one antihistamine is superior to another for the treatment of urticaria. On investigating this, there is little information on comparative efficacy of the various antihistamines. A Cochrane review is looking at this subject, although the report is not yet available. Looking at the individual trials, they do not seem very well conducted and give varying results as to whether one is better than another.

Unless and until we get well-designed RCTs, we can probably pragmatically conclude that there is little difference between them for this indication. Prodigy concludes that there is no strong evidence that one antihistamine is more effective than any other and that individual response to a particular antihistamine is variable.

- **Consultation on Prescribing of Controlled Drugs by Independent Prescribers**

This consultation seeks views on the range of controlled drugs that can be prescribed independently by Nurse Independent Prescribers and a proposal to enable Pharmacist Independent Prescribers to independently prescribe controlled drugs. Replies should be sent directly to the Home Office by 15 June 2007.

[LINK to consultation](#)

- **Consultation on Patient Group Directions**

This consultation seeks views on proposals to expand the range of controlled drugs which can be supplied or administered by nurses and pharmacists working under Patient Group Directions (PGDs). It also contains proposals for changing the locations and circumstances in which they can supply or administer these medicines for the purpose of pain relief. The opportunity is also being taken to clarify the position concerning the sale, as well as supply, of products under PGDs.

[LINK to consultation](#)

- **Medicines guides for skin conditions**

New Medicines Guides on skin conditions are now available via www.medicines.org.uk. Medicine Guides are a source of information for members of the public about individual medicines. The guides are being developed as part of the Medicines Information Project, in partnership with NHS Direct and with the support of a wide range of organisations.

These Guides include information for over 150 different medicines.

<http://medguides.medicines.org.uk/skin.aspx>

This edition is also available on HNN (Health Network Northants)

<http://www.northants.nhs.uk/Display/Dynamic.jsp?topic=14070&lhsid=514&oid=2854¤tid=2854>

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