



Tablet Press

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



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- **Statins and co-enzyme Q10**

A few GPs have had queries from patients regarding whether co-enzyme Q10 should be co-prescribed with statin therapy. Reports in the lay media imply that co-enzyme Q10 can reduce statin-induced myopathy. There is currently no evidence to support this theory and we advise that co-enzyme Q10 is not prescribed on the NHS.

- **Supply of leflunomide 20mg**

We've been asked to issue a reminder that supplies of the 20mg strength are available directly from Sanofi-Aventis. It is however an allocated product unlike the 10mg which is freely available from the wholesalers. In an emergency community pharmacists can obtain supplies from KGH.

It should not therefore be necessary for GPs to issue scripts for 2 x 10mg, except in the unlikely event that both the above measures have failed to secure supply.

- **NICE bites**

The September issue of NICE bites covers "MI – secondary prevention" and can be found at <http://www.nelm.nhs.uk/en/NeLM-Area/Health-In-Focus/NICE-Bites---September-0909/>

- **Naproxen EC**

We are still seeing considerable numbers of prescriptions for the enteric coated formulation of naproxen, although there is no evidence on the value, or otherwise, of enteric coated NSAIDs. There is some trial evidence with aspirin which can be extrapolated and demonstrated no benefit in terms of GI events with an enteric coated formulation. The concept of enteric coated formulations for NSAIDs would appear to stem from the times when the GI adverse events were believed to be due to a direct erosion effect and prior to the understanding of the role of prostaglandin inhibition. EC naproxen costs the PCT an extra £34,000 a year.

- **Quetiapine M/R tablets (Seroquel XL)**

NPAG agreed that this new modified-release version of quetiapine would **only** be used for rapid titration OR to address documented non-compliance with the standard-release, twice-daily formulation. NHT have developed a data collection form for the use of Seroquel XL that their clinicians are required to complete; these will be reviewed by NPAG after 6 months to ensure use is as agreed. Any requests for the XL formulation outside of this use should be queried.

GPs and prescription clerks are also advised to be vigilant when selecting quetiapine on their clinical systems to ensure that the XL formulation is not selected in error when the standard-release product was intended.

- **Oseltamivir dose change**

The Central Alerting Service has issued a letter to alert staff to a change in the dosage regime for oseltamivir in children aged 6 months and over and up to 1 year of age during an influenza pandemic outbreak and the steps that need to be taken to ensure a safe transition to the new dosage. [\[LINK\]](#)

Full information has already been circulated to all GP practices and pharmacy ACPs.

- **Revisions to prescribing information for sitagliptin in US following reports of acute pancreatitis**

The FDA has notified healthcare professionals and patients in the US of revisions to the prescribing information for Januvia® (sitagliptin) and Janumet® (sitagliptin/metformin) to include information on reported cases of acute pancreatitis. The Agency has received 88 post-marketing cases of acute pancreatitis, including 2 cases of haemorrhagic or necrotising pancreatitis in patients using sitagliptin between October 2006 and February 2009. Healthcare professionals are advised to monitor patients for the development of pancreatitis after initiation or dose increases of these preparations. Sitagliptin has not been studied in patients with a history of pancreatitis so it is unknown whether this group is at an increased risk for developing pancreatitis and therefore treatment should be used with caution and with appropriate monitoring in such patients.

- **Updated advice on non-prescription medicines containing codeine or dihydrocodeine (DHC)**

<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Safetyinformation/Safetywarningsalertsandrecalls/Safetywarningsandmessagesformedicines/CON057118>

Following this advice from the MHRA, prescribers need to be mindful that pharmacies can now only sell up to 3 days' supply of these OTC analgesics containing codeine or DHC. This may increase prescription requests.

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

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

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