



# Tablet Press

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



Issue 45

June 2010

- **Price reduction of vardenafil**

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010 the prices of vardenafil (Levitra®) will be as follows:

Pack Size	Current Price	New Price	Reduction
Tabs 20mg x 4	£24.09	£23.48	-2.5%
Tabs 20mg x 8	£48.16	£46.96	-2.5%
Tabs 10mg x 4	£21.68	£14.08	-35%
Tabs 10mg x 8	£43.36	£28.16	-35%
Tabs 5mg x 4	£16.27	£7.56	-53.5%
Tabs 5mg x 8	£32.57	£15.12	-53.5%

Vardenafil will be the least expensive PDE5 inhibitor at all doses. Prescribers are encouraged to use this option first-line for new patients and a reminder to that effect will be installed on Scriptswitch shortly.

- **MUR recommendations**

Community pharmacists are asked to ensure that any recommendations they make are in accordance with PCT prescribing policy. We have recently had cases of GPs being asked to switch standard-release quetiapine to the XL formulation, which is a “red” drug (ie secondary care only). This causes problems for the GP and confusion for the patients. All community pharmacists should receive Tablet Press and the NPAG bullets, which provide this information, and we would ask that all pharmacists including locums are made aware of these documents.

- **Sildenafil for pulmonary hypertension**

Prescribers are reminded that sildenafil for this indication is a specialist area and GPs are advised not take on the prescribing. If you are asked to prescribe, please contact your local Prescribing Adviser or Sue Smith, as this should not be happening.

- **Discontinuation of Ortho-Gynest 0.01% Cream**

Ortho-Gynest 0.01% Cream - (containing Estriol 0.01%) has been discontinued but Gynest Cream, which is an equivalent product, is still available and is manufactured by Marlborough Pharmaceuticals.

- **Scriptswitch roll-out in Northamptonshire**

Following the successful pilot and subsequent business case, the PCT has been able to fund the Scriptswitch license for any practice that wishes to have it during 2010-11.

The uptake by practices has been encouragingly high, with 43 practices already having it installed in April and a further 24 practices due to have it installed during June. It is not too late for any other practices to sign up for Scriptswitch – just contact your local Prescribing Adviser. A demo from Scriptswitch at your practice can be arranged if wished.

For those practices which are just starting to use Scriptswitch please be aware that you can send comments or suggestions to [john.nicholls@northants.nhs.uk](mailto:john.nicholls@northants.nhs.uk)  
John is one of the PCT Prescribing Advisers but also manages the Scriptswitch database.

- **Mirapexin (pramipexole) patent expiry**

The patent on pramipexole expires in December 2010 so it would be wise to ensure that all prescribing is generic. Prescribers are reminded that pramipexole MR is “double red” and should only be prescribed if a “Prior Approval” request has been submitted to and approved by the PCT.

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

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

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