



- **PPIs: too much of a good thing?**

This article in the Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin (DTB) discusses how the advantages of proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) must be balanced against the accumulating evidence suggesting possible harms associated with their long-term use, in light of the continued increase in prescribing (over 9 million prescriptions issued in England during the first quarter of 2010).

The article briefly summarises some of the key studies that have identified a possible increase in the risk of fractures, development/recurrence of Clostridium difficile infection, and pneumonia, associated with the long-term use of PPIs. The author concludes that the benefits of PPI therapy are clear, but that the potential for harmful effects when used in the long-term complicates the assessment of whether they are suitable for individual patients. They say that “this does not mean advising against acid suppression where there are clear indications for treatment; but it does suggest that there needs to be greater scrutiny of prescribing of PPIs. In particular, PPIs should not be prescribed long term or in high doses without regular review and discussion of risks and benefits with the patient. Despite their obvious value, it's time to put PPIs back on the agenda”.

- **Epact not working!**

The national Epact.net system based at the Prescription Pricing Division in Newcastle has suffered a major hardware failure and has been unavailable for the past 2 weeks. Some data is now returning to the system but the Prescribing team is still far from able to access the full range of data as we normally would.

This means that there will be unavoidable delays in obtaining year-end prescribing data and consequently the year-end Prescribing Performance Report, including practice outcomes for the Prescribing Incentive Scheme 2010-11, will be later than normal. This is also delaying practice budget setting for 2011-12.

Please be assured that we will access the relevant data as soon as it becomes available but this situation remains beyond our control at present.

- **MHRA safety update – rare but serious hypersensitivity reactions with prasugrel**

The May 2011 MHRA safety update advises that prasugrel (Efient▼) has been rarely associated with reports of serious hypersensitivity reactions including, very rarely, angioedema; some of which occurred in patients with a history of hypersensitivity to clopidogrel.

Although use of prasugrel is low in Northamptonshire, healthcare professionals should be aware of this risk.

- **QOF QP indicators 2011-12**

The PCT Prescribing Advisory Team has recently circulated guidance to practices on the new QP 1-5 indicators. This guidance has been agreed with Nene Commissioning, Corby Commissioning, the LMC and the PCT QOF validation group.

- **QOF exception reporting**

The PCT QOF exception reporting guidance for DM 26, 27 & 28 (formerly DM 23, 24 & 25) and for CHD 8 and Stroke 8 has been agreed again for 2011-12.

The guidance can be found on the intranet at [QOF exception reporting 2011-12](#) or on Pathfinder at [QOF exception reporting 2011-12](#)

- **Blood glucose test strips / machines**

We are aware that the manufacturers of some BGT machines are inviting patients to “upgrade” their machines and patients may then contact their GP practice to request new strips for their upgraded machine (which are usually more expensive than the previous version).

Practices may wish to use this as an opportunity to discuss with patients the option of moving to the PCT formulary choice meter and strips, CareSens N, which is considerably less expensive than most other options.

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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