



➤ Association of saxagliptin with serious hypersensitivity reactions and acute pancreatitis

Bristol-Myers Squibb and AstraZeneca have issued a letter to healthcare professionals regarding new safety information on the use of saxagliptin and the associated risk of serious hypersensitivity reactions and acute pancreatitis. The letter notes that a review of pharmacovigilance data identified several serious reports of angioedema and associated events and reports of anaphylactic reactions with saxagliptin use. There were also some reports of positive re-challenge. Therefore:

- Saxagliptin is now contra-indicated in patients with a history of serious hypersensitivity reactions, including anaphylactic reaction, anaphylactic shock, or angioedema, to saxagliptin, or any dipeptidyl peptidase 4 (DDP-4) inhibitor
- If a serious hypersensitivity reaction to saxagliptin is suspected, this treatment should be discontinued.

A review of post-marketing reports of pancreatitis revealed that signs occurred after the start of saxagliptin treatment and resolved after discontinuation, suggesting a causal relationship. Moreover, pancreatitis has been recognised as an adverse effect of other DDP-4 inhibitors. Therefore:

- Patients should be informed of the characteristic symptom of acute pancreatitis; persistent, severe abdominal pain
- If pancreatitis is suspected, saxagliptin should be discontinued.

➤ SystmOne defaults

The SystmOne default settings for the quantities of acute prescriptions for both hypnotics and NSAIDs have been set to 14 days. This is to support the Prescribing Incentive Scheme for 2012-13 and reflects good clinical practice.

➤ Change of home oxygen supplier

From the 21st of May NHS Northamptonshire will be working with a new oxygen supplier Air Liquide (Homecare) Ltd under a new contract. The new service specification means there are changes to the paper HOOF including a new requirement for the prescriber to choose the equipment that the patient will use. This has ramifications for ordering oxygen, for advising patients and allaying concerns.

Two training events (17th April in Northampton and 27th April in Kettering) have been arranged to update relevant staff and GP practices are encouraged to send a representative if possible.

xxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.xxx.xx can help with any queries regarding the new contract or these events.

➤ Colief drops

Colief drops are available to buy "over the counter" for the relief of colicky symptoms in babies. They are included in the Drug Tariff (Borderline Substances) which means they can be prescribed but only in the specific circumstances listed i.e. "relief of symptoms associated with lactose intolerance, provided that lactose intolerance has been confirmed". The prescription has to be endorsed 'ACBS'. Prescribers need to be aware that providing a prescription endorsed ACBS for any other indication e.g. simple colic, would in effect be fraudulent and may confidently refuse such requests to prescribe.

➤ Orlistat shortage

There is national shortage of Orlistat 120mg capsules (Xenical[®]). The manufacturer, Roche, have issued the following statement *"There is a temporary interruption to the supply chain and there is now a stock-out of Xenical 120mg Capsules in Roche's UK distribution centre...At this time, Roche does not know how long the stock out will last."*

Hopefully this is unlikely to cause many problems in Northamptonshire due to the double red status of orlistat. For the few patients where prescribing has been agreed via the Prior Approval route, it is unlikely that a short period of time without the medication will have an adverse effect on the patient. For that reason it is not recommended that you issue prescriptions for the lower strength "over the counter" product Alli[®] (Orlistat 60mg) as it is not licensed at the double dose and costs £53 a month compared to £31 for Orlistat.

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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