

Medway Prescriber

Medicines Management

January 2011

Disclaimer: This fact sheet is intended for a professional audience only and is based on the best available information at the time of publication

NPSA Rapid Response Report – Preventing fatalities from medication loading doses.

The NPSA has issued a RRR following a number of incidents related to loading doses that have been reported to the National Reporting and Learning System. The NPSA has identified some areas where improvements could be made in primary care in order to reduce the risk of harm to patients. The following measures are recommended for implementation;

Prescribers

All prescribers should;

It is recommended that doctors in general practice should:

- Identify and risk assess all medicines commonly prescribed in their practice which require a loading dose and that are likely to cause harm if loading doses and subsequent maintenance doses are not prescribed and administered correctly. These drugs can be added to the medicines already listed in the **Critical Medicines** list below.
- If prescribing for a patient transferred from **secondary care**
 - Check discharge summary to see if a drug requiring a loading dose has been prescribed, if the correct dose has been prescribed and if the loading dose has been administered in secondary care.

- Communicate any queries to the consultant
- Ensure that the maintenance dose prescribed is correct and in accord with local guideline.
- When **initiating** therapy, the general practitioner should:
 - Ensure that the correct loading dose is prescribed, following any available local protocols
 - Ensure that the loading dose is not continued for longer than intended. A system should be in place on your computer to ensure that the loading dose is not reproduced on a repeat prescription instead of the maintenance dose.
 - Ensure that clear and adequate instruction is given to the patient and/or the carer regarding administration of the medicine.
- When transferring a patient to a **care home**, the general practitioner should
 - Ensure that there is clear instruction to the carer regarding the administration of any medicine for which a loading dose has been prescribed.

Community Pharmacy

It is recommended that Community Pharmacies should implement the following measures

- Identify all medicines commonly prescribed for dispensing in the community pharmacy which are likely to cause harm if loading doses and subsequent maintenance doses are not prescribed and administered correctly.

These drugs can be added to the medicines already listed in the **Critical Medicines** list below.

- Develop or update the Standard Operating Procedure for dispensing of the medicines on the list of “Critical Medicines” this should include:
 - Carry out checks to see if a patient has been prescribed the medicine previously
 - Clinically check the prescription to ascertain if the correct loading dose and maintenance dose has been prescribed
 - Put in place a procedure for querying any discrepancy (where identified) with the prescriber (consultant or GP)
 - Put in place a system of documenting any discrepancies identified and actions taken for future reference.

Dental Practitioners

The only drug identified in the Rapid Response Report which is commonly used in dental practice is metronidazole.

It is recommended that when prescribing a loading dose of this drug, dental practitioners in primary care should ensure that the correct dose is prescribed following the appropriate protocol.

Critical Medicines

Some of the medications involved in reported incidents which are common in primary care and should be included in the list of “Critical Medicines” are as follows:

Aminophylline
Amiodarone
Aspirin
Digoxin
Metronidazole
Phenytoin
Phenobarbitone

For the full text of the Rapid Response Report and the supporting document, please go to <http://www.nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/alerts/?entryid45=92305&q=0%c2%acloading+dose%c2%ac>

References

National Patient Safety Agency. *Preventing fatalities from medication loading doses*: Rapid response report; NPSA/2010/RRR018 NPSA: London
<http://www.nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/alerts/?entryid45=92305&q=0%c2%acloading+dose%c2%ac>

Controlled Drug Incident Reporting

Please can all pharmacies ensure that ALL dispensary staff, including locums are aware of the procedure for reporting CD incidents. There have been incidents that have gone unreported to the Accountable Officer for sometime because a locum didn't have the correct information.

The Accountable Officer for Medway is Dr Peter Green and all incident should be reported as soon as possible via the email address; controlleddrugs.medwaypct@nhs.net, giving as much information about the incident as possible.

Private Prescriptions issued using EMIS LV

It has been brought to our attention that in some cases the EMIS LV system is converting private prescription to Barcode FP10 prescription when issued at the same time as other FP10 repeat items. This is mainly affecting patients receiving private prescription for Erectile Dysfunction medication. We ask that all surgeries that use EMIS LV be extra vigilant when issuing these types of prescriptions.

Here are a few tips that you may find useful/helpful.

- Consider prescribing branded medication i.e. Viagra to private patients and Generic medication i.e. Sildenafil to FP10 patients.

This could help distinguish between the two at a glance.

- Use a screen message option to alert the user that this item should be a private prescription
- Consider issuing the private prescriptions as acute medication and then annotate that the prescription may be repeated by the desired amount

EMIS are aware of this and are trying to rectify the situation. If you have any concerns or suggestions on this matter please contact the team

Reminder

Dabigatran should not be prescribed until a local PCT policy guideline is agreed across Kent and Medway. As soon as NICE Guidance is sent out for consultation, a Kent and Medway wide meeting is to be arranged with a wide range of stakeholders to agree a county-wide prescribing strategy for Dabigatran.

Glyceryl Trinitrate Sublingual Spray

Recent changes to the description of GTN spray in the drug tariff please see link for further details: http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Documents/PrescriptionServices/Hints_and_Tips_Information_Systems_-_Issue_2.pdf

Patient enquiry numbers for prescription pre-payment certificates and low income scheme forms

NHS Prescription Services has noticed an increasing number of patients telephoning them when trying to contact NHS Help with Health Costs for prescription pre-payment certificate (PPC) and low income (HC1 & HC 5 forms) enquires.

NHS Prescription Services is not able to deal with these enquiries, so to help them make sure that

patients speak to the right team first time, NHS Help with Health Costs has provided us with the following list of contact numbers for your reference.

- **HC1 & HC5 Form (England)** – Form ordering line **0845 6101112**
- **HC1 Form (England)** – Form filling service **0845 8501166**
- **HC1 & HC5 Form (Wales)** – Form ordering line **0845 6031108**
- **Prepayment Certificate** – Ordering & advice line **0845 8500030**
- **Medical Exemption Certificate enquiries** - **0845 6018076**
- **Working Tax Credit / Child Tax Credit exemption enquires:** **0845 3003900** Great Britain, **0845 6032000** - N. Ireland

'Message in a bottle' Scheme

This scheme is designed to encourage people to keep their personal and medical details on a standard form and in a common location – the Fridge. Whilst it is focused on the more vulnerable people in our community, anyone can have an accident at home, so this scheme can indeed benefit all of your customers. We have sourced the bottles from the Medway Lions club although you may have seen them in the past as they are produced by many different organisations across the country. Each bottle contains a form on which the user enters their name, address, medication currently being taken, any known allergies and the details of an emergency contact. There is also a sticker which is to be placed on the inside of the patients' front door which ambulance crew know to look for when attending a casualty at home. Bottles will be distributed to pharmacies by the PCT during February, March and April and they can then be handed out to customers you feel would benefit from them. More bottles can be ordered depending on popularity of the scheme is, so please contact Verity Williams on 01634 335084 if you require more.

‘Green Bags’ – Improve safety and reduce medicines waste

Along with the ‘Message in a Bottle’ scheme the Pharmacy Team are also trying to source ‘Green Bags’ for community pharmacies to give to patients.

The ‘green bag’ scheme makes it easier for NHS staff to find out which medicines a patient is taking when they are admitted for a planned operation or procedure or in an emergency case.

Any drugs currently being taken by the patient can be placed in a green bag which are, easy to identify and reusable.

The new initiative will benefit patients and NHS staff as it will help the right medicines to be given without delay, with relevant drugs all in the same place including up to date information about what the patient should take and when.

As well as being given out in pharmacies the bags can also be obtained through hospital outpatient departments, A & E and hospital pharmacies. These will be coming to you in the near future however we do not yet have a confirmed date.

‘Valentines bags’ from the Chlamydia Team

As we are sure you are aware during the year the Chlamydia Team undertake different campaigns and with Valentines just around the corner this year they would like to try a different approach and work with all the pharmacists.

The hope is that every pharmacy across Medway will be provided with a given number of ‘Goody bags’ and they will be asked to hand them out to any young people they engage with week commencing 14th Feb for one week. Once they run out then they won’t need to be re-stocked and

if they have any left they will be collected the following week.

Pharmacies will be visited the week before when the bags are delivered and informed that they can give them to anyone aged between the age of 13 and 25, this does not have to be following a consultation.

Information Governance Submissions March 2011

By 31 March 2011 community pharmacies will be expected to attain level 2 against the version 8 requirements. Please ensure you are working towards this and your submission is made on the Connecting for Health website via the tool kit as before.

We will be visiting some pharmacies in March to look at the evidence for each requirement and any we do not get to will be visited later in the year.

Useful Links

MHRA - Follow the link for the latest copies of the drug safety update;

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<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Publications/index.htm>

NICE - Follow the link for NICE guidance issued in September 2010

<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/Date/2010#dec>

Follow the link below for Nice Bites which is a concise summary of recent Nice Guidance:

<http://www.elmmb.nhs.uk/newsletters/nice-bites/?assetdetesc1347050=40236>

NeLM - Follow the link for NeLM

<http://www.nelm.nhs.uk/en/NeLM-Area/News/>