

Medicines Optimisation News Headlines January 2013

1. Melatonin

NICE recently published an [evidence summary](#) for use of melatonin in Sleep disorders in children and young people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. No high-quality studies were identified that provided evidence for the efficacy of prolonged release melatonin tablets (licensed in the UK) used off-label in children with sleep disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Limited evidence for unlicensed melatonin products was identified.

The evidence suggests that unlicensed melatonin products, taken for 10 days to 4 weeks, may reduce sleep onset latency (the time taken for a child to go to sleep) in children with sleep onset insomnia and ADHD by approximately 20 minutes. In addition melatonin may improve average sleep duration by 15 to 20 minutes. However, there are limitations to these small studies, and longer term efficacy is unclear.

2. Vagifem® Estradiol vaginal tablets 25 micrograms DISCONTINUED

Vagifem tablets 25 micrograms have been discontinued. The decision to reduce the dose has been made due to an association with ovarian, breast and endometrial cancer. In order to reduce the risk of these conditions occurring, the dose has been reduced to the minimum effective dose (10 microgram). This minimises the risk of inducing such cancers, especially endometrial disease. The **10microgram tablets remain available**. A letter has been sent to all GPs from [Novo Nordisk](#) and more information is available on their website.

3. Toxicity of Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAID)

Prescribers are reminded of the potential toxicity of NSAIDs especially in older patients. Even a short course of diclofenac can precipitate renal or heart failure. All patients over 65 years receiving a NSAID, even for a short period, are also at risk of gastric bleeding and should also have a PPI for gastro-protection.

University Hospital Southampton has recently changed their choice of TTO to ibuprofen, and they are reviewing their gastro-protection policy. The Medicines Optimisation Team are working with Hampshire Hospitals to ensure the safe prescribing of NSAIDs to their patients.

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4. Antivirals for treatment of influenza

The Department of Health has contacted all practices to highlight the at-risk groups and patients who are eligible for treatment at NHS expense with either **oseltamivir** (Tamiflu) or **zanamivir** (Relenza) for the prophylaxis and treatment of influenza in accordance with NICE guidance and as outlined in Part XVIII B of the Drug Tariff . The most recent surveillance data indicate that there is now a substantial likelihood that people, including children in schools, presenting with an influenza-like illness are infected with an influenza virus.

5. Reminder to prescribe drugs for breast cancer generically

Drug	Cost per 28 days*	Cost per 28 days (non-generic)**
Anastrozole 1mg tabs	£1.94	£68.56 (Arimidex)
Exemestane	£10.89	£88.80 (Aromasin)
Letrozole	£4.40	£84.86 (Femara)

*Drug Tariff January 2013

**Mims January 2013

6. Vitamin D doses

Dosage regimes for oral Vitamin D for patients found to be deficient, can be found on [Map of Medicine](#) and in [NeLM's Q and A series](#)

Recent Guideline Updates

- ***Basingstoke, Southampton and Winchester District Prescribing Committee OSTEOPOROSIS guidelines***

Available on Pages4PrimaryCare at www.hampshire.nhs.uk/primary-care

UserName: HampshireGP

Password: Rosebowl

[Link](#)

- **Denosumab shared care guidelines** for the treatment of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women at increased risk of fractures.
Also available on Pages4PrimaryCare at www.hampshire.nhs.uk/primary-care

[Link](#)

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