

Medicines Optimisation News Headlines March 2013

1. Risk of atypical femoral fracture with Prolia (denosumab)

Atypical femoral fractures have been reported rarely in post-menopausal women receiving Prolia (denosumab).

[Link](#)

2. Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs advice on tramadol

The ACMD has advised the Home Office of the harms associated with non-medicinal use of tramadol particularly the increase in tramadol related deaths.

[Link](#)

3. Insulin Passports

A reminder from DPC Safety sub-group that all insulin dependent patients should have an insulin passport by 31 March 2013, in line with NPSA safety alert. These can be obtained from community pharmacies as part of the New Medicines Service (NMS) or during MURs or from the PPSA.

4. Price increases for temazepam tablets

Drug Tariff prices for temazepam tablets are due to rise in April 2013

	Cost of 28 Temazepam 10mg tabs	Cost of 28 Temazepam 20mg tabs
March 2013 Drug Tariff price	£2.71	£4.23
April 2013 Drug Tariff price	£5.20	£9.20

Because of stock shortages pharmacies have been allowed to claim higher prices under the NCSO (No Cheaper Stock Obtainable) rules. During February costs were £24 for 28 x 10mg tablets and £25 for 28 x 20mg tablets.

Even if prices return to Drug Tariff levels, temazepam tablets will be more expensive than zopiclone and zolpidem. Prices for these in the March 2013 Drug Tariff are:

Zolpidem 10mg 28 = £1.84

Zolpidem 5mg 28 = £1.96

Zopiclone 3.75mg 28 = £1.52

Zopiclone 7.5mg 28 = £1.43

NICE TA77 Prescribing guidance for the short term treatment of insomnia recommends that, “because of the lack of compelling evidence to distinguish between zaleplon, zolpidem, zopiclone or the shorter-acting benzodiazepine hypnotics, the drug with the lowest purchase cost (taking into account daily required dose and product price per dose) should be prescribed”

[Link](#)

5. Supply problems

- **Potassium chloride tablets 600mg (Slow K)**
Alliance Pharmaceuticals is currently unable to supply Slow-K® tablets 600mg (potassium chloride) containing 8mmol each of K⁺ and Cl⁻, due to a manufacturing delay. There is unlikely to be any stock until the end of 2013.
Prescribers are recommended to consider other potassium chloride preparations such as Kay-Cee-L® syrup (1mmol/ml each of K⁺ and Cl⁻) or Sando-K® effervescent tablets (12mmol of K⁺ and 8mmol Cl⁻).
- **Infant Gaviscon**
Supplies should resume by the end of March.
- **Isosorbide mononitrate tablets**
There is a shortage of normal release isosorbide mononitrate tablets.
In the absence of normal release tablets being available, clinicians are advised to consider substitution with a slow release mononitrate preparation (which are not affected by this supply problem). Limited data exists regarding switching from normal release to modified release tablets but initially a mg per mg substitution would be appropriate (i.e. the same daily dose overall) in most patients, and where available formulations allow. Because information on the dose equivalence of these products is uncertain, clinical oversight to consider further dose adjustment is advised. If any clinician has concern about prescribing for a particular patient, specialist advice should be sought.
- **Trazodone**
There is a shortage of trazodone tablets. It appears there is a liquid formulation 50mg in 5ml that may be available (MIMS price £31.91 for 120ml). Please contact your Lead Pharmacist for advice about alternatives for individual patients.

Guidelines and Medicines Optimisation advice is available on Pages4PrimaryCare at www.hampshire.nhs.uk/primary-care

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