

Medicines Optimisation news headlines

JULY 2014

1. Update on Denosumab

Denosumab 60mg injection (Prolia[®]) has been classified as an amber drug within the local health community, when prescribed for the prevention of fractures associated with osteoporosis. According to the terms of the recently agreed enhanced service agreement, initiation of denosumab will generally be on the recommendation of a specialist. However, all doses, including the first dose, will be administered in primary care. The exception to this is where the decision to initiate treatment is taken whilst the recipient is a hospital in-patient. Subsequent doses should be administered in primary care at 6 monthly intervals as set out in the [Full shared care guideline](#) or [GP summary](#)

Amgen have produced a series of user guides to aid the addition of denosumab to clinical systems. They also describe the facility to set up a recall system which will alert the surgery when patients are due their next dose. Individual guides have been prepared to cater for each of the clinical systems and these are available from members of the Medicines Management Team. Please [contact](#) the pharmacist or technician who normally visits your practice for further details.

Denosumab 120mg injection (Xgeva[®]) for reduction of skeletal events in patients with bone metastases remains a red drug for secondary care prescribing and administration.

2. Venlafaxine

A reminder that when a modified release formulation of venlafaxine is required it should be prescribed generically as a tablet. Prescriptions for generic modified release capsules are significantly more expensive.

Venlafaxine strength	Generic tablet price (pa)	Generic capsule price (pa)
75mg m/r	£136	£287
150mg m/r	£227	£479

Nearly £50,000 was spent on modified release capsules in West Hampshire over the last 6 months and usage is increasing. This cost could be reduced by more than half with a change to modified release tablets.

Some capsule brands are available at a reduced price but they must be prescribed by their brand name in order to take advantage of this. Please be aware that the brand prices vary widely and some may be more expensive than the drug tariff.

3. Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) and Forticreme

ONS products are intended as an adjunct to normal meals for short term provision of additional calories and nutrients. Products containing 1.5kcal per ml or less are not routinely recommended unless there is a clear rationale set out for their use. The nutritional content can easily be matched by food alternatives.

Forticreme falls into the group of low calorie items and yet West Hampshire practices have spent over £97,000 on this product alone within the last 12 months. See the [ONS guidance](#) for further information and suggestions for alternative strategies and [Nutrition pages](#) which include an ONS request form that can be used by community nurses and nursing homes.

4. New licensed Vitamin D products

Fultium D3

800unit strength tablets (equivalent to 20 microgram of vitamin D) have been available on the CCG formulary for some time for the treatment of vitamin D deficiency in patients over 12 years of age. A higher strength tablet containing 3,200units has now been marketed for adults, reducing the number of capsules that many patients are required to take. For full prescribing information see the [Summary of Product Characteristics](#).

Cost: £3.60 for 30 x 800units, £13.32 for 30 x 3200units

InvitaD3 25,000unit in 1ml oral solution

1ml plastic ampoules of oral solution, each containing 25,000units of vitamin D in olive oil, have been licensed for the treatment of vitamin D deficiency in patients of all ages.

For full prescribing information see the [Summary of Product Characteristics](#)

Cost: £4.45 for 3 ampoules

5. Haematology Helpline

Email: bnh-ft.sthrnhaemophilianetwork@nhs.net

For practices that refer to Winchester hospital this is an email address that can be used for simple clinical questions, including whether referral is necessary. It is for both bleeding and thrombosis issues. It will be checked daily Monday to Friday (9-5pm). Clinical questions will be answered by one of the consultant haematologists at the haemophilia centre in Basingstoke (Dr Mangles or Dr Everington). The email is also available via the new website for the Southern Haemophilia Network www.haemophilianetwork.org.uk. This also includes details on how to contact people on call across the region for haemophilia.

For more complex or urgent haematology clinical questions please call 01256 314793.

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