

Medicines

Optimisation news headlines

September 2015

'Top Tips'

Salmeterol and fluticasone propionate combination metered dose inhalers - Seretide and Sirdupla

Until recently Seretide was the only brand of this combination available. In June of this year a new brand of the 25/125 and 25/ 250 strengths called Sirdupla was launched.

Sirdupla is 25% less expensive than the equivalent Seretide inhalers and GSK has responded by offering a primary care rebate which significantly reduces the cost to the CCG.

A briefing and 'Frequently Asked Questions' on the options to practices is available: [LINK](#)

It is good practice to ensure that patients remain on the same brand of inhaler to ensure consistency with drug delivery and use of the device. There is considerable prescribing of this as a generic preparation and it is recommended that the clinical systems are amended to prescribe one or other of these brands. The medicines management team will provide the necessary support.

Focus on specials – Magnesium supplementation as Magnaspartate®

Oral magnesium preparations may be given for the treatment of chronic hypomagnesaemia (serum magnesium concentration of 0.4 mmol/L or less) in doses adjusted according to individual requirements. The British National Formulary states that oral magnesium may be given by mouth at a dose of 24 mmol daily in divided doses to prevent the recurrence of hypomagnesaemia, but also states that there is limited evidence of benefit. Before commencing treatment it is important to review any drugs which may be causing hypomagnesaemia (e.g. diuretics and PPIs, particularly omeprazole).

Magnesium-L-aspartate ([Magnaspartate®](#)) has recently been licensed in the UK for the treatment and prevention of magnesium deficiency. Prior to this there were no oral magnesium preparations licensed in the UK for this indication, resulting in prescriptions for a range of unlicensed preparations as summarised below:

Product	No of Doses	Total Cost
Magnesium Glycerophosphate Capsule 97.2mg (0.4mmol Mg)	252	£694
Magnesium Glycerophosphate Oral Solution 121.25mg in 5ml (0.5mmol Mg in 5ml)	140	£366
Magnesium Glycerophosphate Tablet 97.2mg (0.4mmol Mg)	818	£2049
Magnesium Glycerophosphate Chewable Tablet S/F 97.2mg (0.4mmol Mg)	6756	£4066
Magnesium Oxide Capsule 100mg (2.5mmol)	190	£618
Magnesium Oxide Capsule 160mg (4mmol)	1232	£1154
Magnesium Oxide Tablet 400mg (10mmol)	84	£99
West Hampshire Total for April to June 2015 inclusive	9472	£9046



Magnesium-L-aspartate (Magnaspartate[®]) is the preferred choice for the treatment and prevention of magnesium deficiency when clinically appropriate, as it is the only UK licensed oral magnesium preparation for these indications.

It is presented in sachets containing 243mg of magnesium aspartate (equivalent to 10mmol of magnesium) as a peach/apricot flavoured powder to be dissolved in 50-200ml of water, tea or orange juice. The powder can be measured out to provide lower doses, one level 5ml spoonful of powder providing 4.5mmol magnesium. The cost is £8.95 for 10 sachets.

It should be noted that swapping between magnesium preparations on a millimole for millimole basis requires caution, as they have differing bioavailability and may not have an equivalent therapeutic effect. Whichever product is used it needs to be titrated to the maximum tolerated dose with monitoring of serum magnesium levels. Further information comparing the different preparations can be found in the [UKMi summary](#) of July 2015

Safety Information - Co-proxamol

In 2005 an evidence review of the safety and effectiveness of co-proxamol found that the benefits of this medicine did not outweigh the risks and that it should be gradually withdrawn from clinical use. This resulted in the UK license being revoked and the product was removed from the market through a planned withdrawal. It is estimated that the withdrawal of co-proxamol from the UK has saved around 300–400 lives each year from self-poisoning, around a fifth of which were accidental.

Following further discussion of the evidence in June 2010, the European Commission Directive recommended withdrawal of all products containing dextropropoxyphene across European Union countries.

In 2011 new data from the United States showed that dextropropoxyphene can have serious effects on the electrical activity of the heart (resulting in prolongation of the P-R and Q-T intervals, and widened QRS complexes), even at normal therapeutic doses. As a result all products containing this agent were withdrawn from the US market.

Co-proxamol can be obtained on an unlicensed 'named patient' basis for use in exceptional circumstances, but there remains a considerable amount of prescribing in West Hampshire, (around £40,000 per annum). Please ensure that this unlicensed product is still indicated and cannot be replaced by an alternative licensed product.

Laxido paediatric

Laxido is now available in an unflavoured paediatric formulation. The active constituents are the same as Movicol Paediatric, but the cost is only £2.99 for a box of 30 sachets in comparison to £4.38 (MIMS price as of September 2015).

Catherine McLean
Interface Pharmacist, Medicines Management
catherine.mclean2@nhs.net
023 8062 7466

Dr Emma Harris
Clinical Director, Medicines Management
emma.harris25@nhs.net

Quality services, better health

