

Recommendations for the Cost Effective Prescribing of Quetiapine

The East Kent Prescribing Group has approved the Kent and Medway Partnership recommendations for the cost effective use of quetiapine.

These recommend:

1. Switching patients on modified release quetiapine to immediate release quetiapine in accordance with the switching guidance provided.
2. For patients who cannot be changed to immediate release quetiapine prescribe one of the branded generic quetiapine modified release preparations such as Biquelle XL or ZaluronXL.

Approved by: East Kent Prescribing Group (Representing Ashford CCG, Canterbury and Coastal CCG, South Kent Coast CCG and Thanet CCG)

Date: February 2015

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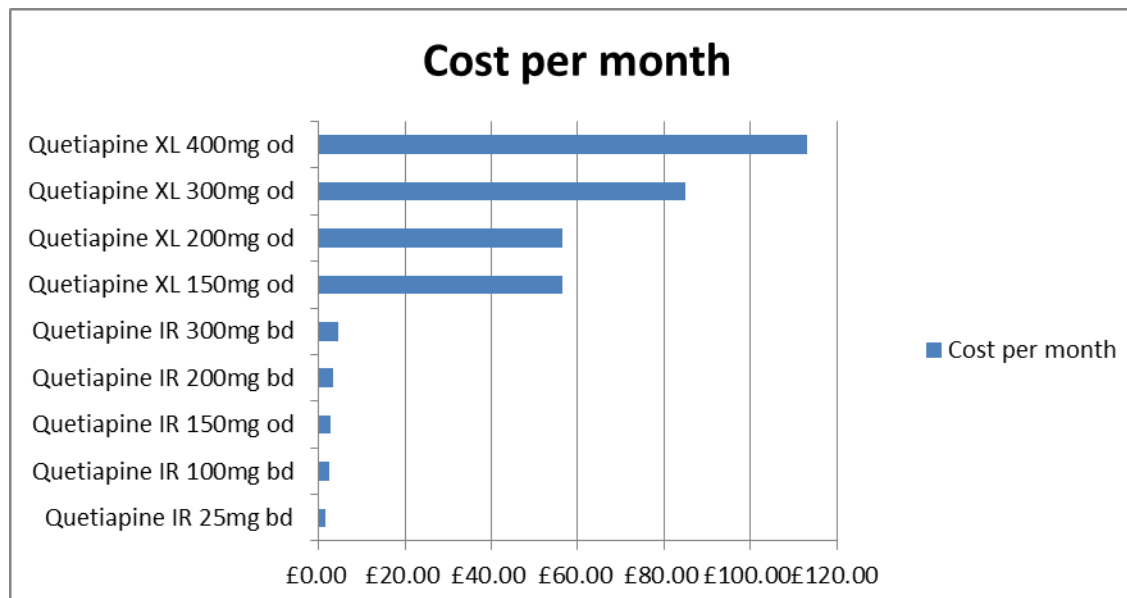
COST EFFECTIVE USE OF QUETIAPINE

Background

- Quetiapine is available in immediate release (IR) and modified release (XL) formulations, which have similar bioavailability
- Quetiapine XL is licensed to be given once daily and IR is licensed to be given twice daily, and once daily for the treatment of bipolar depression
- Quetiapine XL is significantly more expensive than IR, and switching from XL to IR will maximise the cost benefits
- Quetiapine IR may be associated with a slightly higher risk of sedation and postural hypotension following the switch. If these effects are of concern, clinicians may consider giving a smaller dose in the morning and a larger dose in the evening

Cost benefits

- Quetiapine IR tablets given twice a day are about 95% cheaper than prescribing quetiapine XL in the same daily dose once daily
- Potential savings to the health economy are over £500k



Proposed action

- Switch patients stabilised on quetiapine XL to quetiapine IR – see algorithm over page
- Any potential switch to be discussed with patient and carer and monitor for side effects
- If patient has concordance and/or tolerability issues, switching may not be appropriate. The continued use of quetiapine XL must be documented and explained in correspondence with GP
- If quetiapine XL required, consider prescribing a branded generic, such as Biquelle XL or Zaluron XL, which is around half the Drug Tariff price of quetiapine XL.

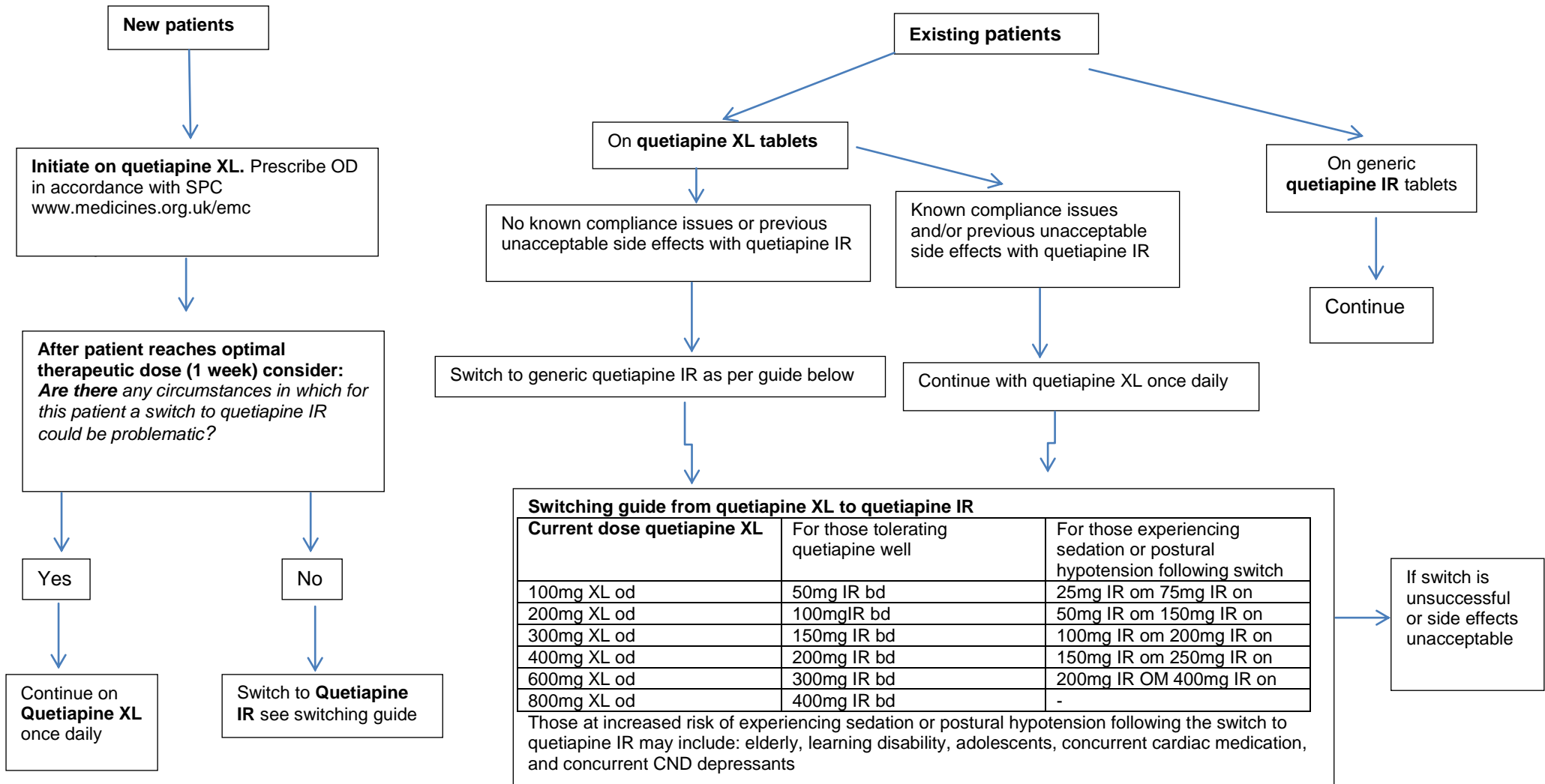
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• GUIDANCE FOR USE OF QUETIAPINE



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Patient Information Leaflet

Switching from quetiapine XL tablets to quetiapine IR plain tablets

Why are you asking me to switch?

Two years ago quetiapine IR plain tablets started to reduce in price. This has not happened with quetiapine XL extended release tablets. The NHS is trying hard not to waste money and switching preparations can be a safe way to do this.

How much does quetiapine cost?

There is a big difference in the price of quetiapine plain tablets and quetiapine XL, and this depends on the dose taken. Quetiapine XL is about 40 times as expensive as quetiapine plain.

Why is the price of quetiapine plain tablets cheaper?

The Government allows the price of a new medicine to be set at a sufficiently high price to recoup the cost of research, and allows for further research to take place. After an agreed number of years this price protection (patent) is lost and other companies are allowed to make and sell the same drug in the UK. This competition usually results in the price falling dramatically.

What is the difference between the plain IR and XL tablets?

Both types of tablet have the same active ingredient – quetiapine. The XL tablets release quetiapine more slowly into the body than the plain tablets, although they both work equally well when given at equivalent doses. This means that switching is unlikely to affect how well the tablet works. However, should you feel that the new tablets are not working as well, please discuss this with your doctor.

Will I have to change how I take my tablets?

Plain tablets are usually taken twice a day. You may need to change from taking quetiapine XL once a day to taking plain tablets twice a day. However, plain tablets can be taken once a day, like the XL tablet, if you or your doctor thinks it will help you. Some people prefer to take their quetiapine once a day to help them remember to take it.

Will I experience any side effects if I change?

One of the side effects some people experience when taking quetiapine is feeling sleepy during the day. Plain quetiapine tablets, if taken once a day may make you feel a little more sleepy than your XL tablets did. This is not necessarily a problem if the quetiapine is taken in the evening so you are in bed when it starts to take effect. If you are concerned about any new side effects that last more than a few days, please contact your doctor to discuss them.

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