

## Medicines Optimisation updates – [December 2022 / Issue 41]

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## HSJ Award Success

The Medicines Optimisation team had three shortlisted programmes at the HSJ Patient Safety Awards last month.

On the night, the team was highly commended in the 'Improving Safety in Medicines Management category' recognising their hard work on a project with Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT), involving the design and implementation of a local service within East Kent to support 20 practices to reduce high opioid doses.

The two other programmes which made the shortlist were:

- system wide response to sodium valproate pregnancy prevention programme
- risk stratification in primary care



This is a fantastic achievement and brilliant recognition for all the hard work put in by pharmacists and clinicians across Kent and Medway that have been involved in these projects.

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## Over The Counter Prescribing

As you are aware, the Medicines Optimisation Scheme includes a quality, innovation, productivity and prevention (QIPP) element for reducing prescriptions for over-the-counter medication in line with national guidance.

To support practices and pharmacies, the Medicines Optimisation Team

have put together a selection of patient information posters to promote the use of self-care.

These posters will be sent to all practices and pharmacies. Digital images for information screens are [available on our GP communications resource page](#).

The campaign is designed to encourage patients to speak with their local pharmacist before contacting their GP surgery, promoting the theme of “if you take care of the little things, your NHS can keep taking care of you”.

There is also a range of informative fact sheets available on the [Self Care Forum](#) website that may assist you further. These fact sheets cover many minor ailments such as the common cold in adults, fever in children, sore throat and backpain, as well as many others.

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## COPD Inhaler guidance reminder

We would like to remind practices that the COPD guidelines were revised and published in February 2022. The inhalers suggested on the guideline are guidance only; the Kent and Medway formularies also have a variety of additional inhalers that can be prescribed. Different inhaler types will suit patients differently, and respiratory specialists will make a clinical decision, with the patient, to ensure the most appropriate inhaler is chosen. When initiating inhalers for COPD in primary care, and receiving requests from secondary care experts, please refer to formulary options, as well as the guideline itself.

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## Discontinuation of Stemetil 5mg/5ml Syrup

A [recall notice](#) has been issued for all batches of Stemetil 5mg/5ml Syrup as a precautionary measure due to the identification of N-nitrosomethylphenylamine (NMPA) above the acceptable limit.

There will be no further production of Stemetil 5mg/5ml syrup, so this is in effect a product discontinuation and supplies are no longer available.

Further information is available [here](#). Please note the [SPS Medicines Supply Tool](#) has also been updated with advice regarding alternatives, considerations and background, clinical information and details regarding the licensed indications for the various formulations available

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## Asthma and nebulisers

A reminder that it is not advised for anyone with asthma to have a home nebuliser. There is a danger that they may stay at home, and try to manage symptoms, when they should not delay in attending A&E, for treatment of the underlying cause of their poor control.

One of the key recommendations of the National Review of Asthma Deaths 2014, states “where loss of control is identified, immediate action is required, including escalation of responsibility, treatment change and arrangements for follow-up.”

As soon as a person with asthma is poorly controlled enough to potentially need a nebuliser they should call 999 for specialist life-saving treatment. Personal Asthma Action Plans advise that if these people are struggling to breathe, they can use 10 puffs of a Salbutamol inhaler via a spacer, each puff at 30 second intervals, and to call for an ambulance.

**We would advise that if an asthma patient asks for Salbutamol nebulisers, because they have bought a nebuliser, the above advice is reinforced and nebulisers not prescribed.**

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## All ranitidine products – license suspended

We would like to highlight to all GP practices that the licence for all ranitidine medicinal products has been suspended. It has been identified that a small number of products has continued to be prescribed or

been restarted and dispensed in recent months. These products should no longer be prescribed so please be alert to any prescribing requests or activity and prescribe an alternative product.

Following further investigations into the low levels of impurities, N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), found in ranitidine products the suspension has been confirmed by the EMA and MHRA in 2020. Please be aware that although safety data shows that the risk of cancer with ranitidine is likely to be very low there remains some uncertainty with the source of the impurity. Some evidence suggests the degradation of ranitidine may form NDMA and some studies suggest it may form once in the body. Due to these uncertainties, the ranitidine licence has been suspended as a precaution. Please see further details [here](#) and tables 1 and 2 [here](#) for the recommended alternatives to ranitidine.

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## Shortages Summary Dec 2022

Please find the medicines shortages update (7<sup>th</sup> December 2022) embedded below. Practices are encouraged to register for access to the SPS website <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/> and access the full medicines supply tool directly in real time.



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## MHRA Updates

The latest MHRA Drug Safety Updates can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update> . This includes links to alerts, recalls and safety information and to the monthly Drug Safety Update PDF newsletter.

The November 2022 Drug Safety Update includes:

**[Dupilumab \(Dupixent ▼\): risk of ocular adverse reactions and need for prompt management - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)**

The update describes the risk of ocular adverse reactions in patients prescribed dupilumab. The MHRA advise healthcare professionals to be alert to new onset or worsening ocular symptoms, such as dry eye (which can also include paradoxical eye watering), keratitis and ulcerative keratitis, and to ensure they are promptly managed.

**[Consultation with healthcare professionals: please complete our consultation to help influence how we communicate with you - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)**

The MHRA ask healthcare professionals to take part in their consultation. They are gathering feedback with a view to transforming how they engage and work together on our common goal of greater patient safety.

**[COVID-19 vaccines and medicines: updates for November 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)**

**[Letters and medicine recalls sent to healthcare professionals in October 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)**

Please follow the link in the title above for more information and resources.

The MHRA Central Alerting System alerts can be accessed at <https://www.cas.mhra.gov.uk/Home.aspx> .

National Patient Safety Alerts can be accessed at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-safety/patient-safety-alerts/> .

*We are reviewing our response to MHRA and National Patient Safety Alerts to include local advice. In the meantime, we have included a summary of the MHRA Drug Safety Update.*

*This update is prepared by the NHS Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team.*

## NICE News December 2022

Please find the NICE News for December 2022 here.



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Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this newsletter is accurate and up to date at the time of publication. Please be aware that information about medicines and therapeutics will change over time, and that information may not be current after the initial date of publication. Please take note of the publication date and seek further advice if in any doubt about the accuracy of the information. The information contained in this newsletter is the best available from the resources at our disposal at the time. Acronyms used are standard formulary. This newsletter is produced by the NHS Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team on behalf of the Kent & Medway ICB. For all correspondence including any queries, please contact the Medicines Optimisation team email: [kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net](mailto:kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net)