Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

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Safety guidance

1. **British Menopause Society (BMS): Inappropriate doses of oestrogen and progestogen in menopause LINK**

A joint women's health safety alert from six leading UK health bodies (BMS, FSRH, RCGP, RCOG, SfE and RCN) has been published in response to concerns about requests from private clinics to prescribe high doses of oestrogen, outside of product licence & sometimes with insufficient progestogen, for women experiencing menopause symptoms. It is important that women requiring treatment are managed safely within established guidelines set out by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) LINK, MHRA and national and international guidance. The guidance is to aim for the lowest effective dose to control symptoms.

Local guidance

2. **Chronic Pain Prescribing Guideline LINK**

An updated version of the Chronic Pain Prescribing Guideline is available to facilitate appropriate prescribing in primary care for adults presenting with persistent non-malignant, non-palliative pain.

Chronic pain is difficult to treat, with most drug treatments only helping a minority of patients. If pharmacological treatment is prescribed, it should be considered a small part of the broader plan.

The guideline includes best practice advice, key messages around opioid stewardship and links to national guidance. There are appendices that include an NSAID prescribing decision flowchart and an opioid tapering guide.

3. **The Wessex Opioid Group: Opioid checklists for Primary Care Networks LINK**

These practical checklists have been developed to provide PCNs with a starting place to discuss what they have, and don't have, in place to provide safer management and prescribing of opioids for their patients with chronic, non-cancer pain. There are two versions of the checklist – one applicable to patients already prescribed an opioid and another for patients being started on an opioid.

National guidance

4. SIGN: National clinical guideline for stroke for the UK and Ireland   LINK

This partial update of 2016 edition, developed in collaboration with Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) & National Clinical Programme for Stroke, Ireland, is endorsed for use in clinical practice by RCP (London), SIGN & RCP (Ireland).

5. SIGN: Pharmacological management of migraine LINK

Following a scoping review, this SIGN guideline has been updated to include revised safety advice on use of topiramate, candesartan, flunarizine and CGRP monoclonal antibodies, Scottish Medicines Consortium advice on eptinezumab, and recommended use of sodium valproate restricted to patients > 55 years.

Other

6. DHSC: Guidance on the HRT prescription prepayment certificate (PPC) LINK

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) released additional information on the new HRT pre-payment certificate on 22nd March.

The guidance states that prescribers will be required from 1 April to manually issue (e.g., via EPS) prescriptions for all listed HRT items as single-item prescriptions (i.e., separate from all other prescription items, including other listed HRT items). This is because NHSBSA and dispensing systems are not designed to handle mixed charge prescriptions. A digital solution will be introduced as soon as possible to automate the issuing of listed HRT items as single-item prescriptions at the point of prescribing.

The NHSBSA webpage LINK contains an alphabetical list of the approved HRT medicines that can be supplied against the 12-month HRT PPC, for a cost of £19.30.

7. Specialist Pharmacy Service : Using bisphosphonates with proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) LINK

This SPS resource provides guidance for the use of bisphosphonates with PPIs due to increased risk of fractures when taken together. Alternative options for managing dyspepsia, monitoring advice and counselling points are also covered.