

Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

Issue: 103

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Safety guidance

1. MHRA drug safety update: Topiramate (Topamax): introduction of new safety measures, including a Pregnancy Prevention Programme [LINK](#)

Topiramate is now contraindicated in pregnancy and in women of childbearing potential unless the conditions of a Pregnancy Prevention Programme are fulfilled. This follows a review by the MHRA which concluded that the use of topiramate during pregnancy is associated with significant harm to the unborn child. Harms included a higher risk of congenital malformation, low birth weight and a potential increased risk of intellectual disability, autistic spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children of mothers taking topiramate during pregnancy. The SPC has been updated in line with MHRA guidance ([LINK](#))

A number of resources are now available as part of the topiramate pregnancy prevention programme. Educational materials for patients include a patient guide, risk awareness form and patient card. SPS have produced a summary of the risk minimisation materials available. ([LINK](#))

HIOW ICB will be working with partners to help support these new safety measures.

2. Clozapine resources on SPS website:

Clinical considerations for patients prescribed clozapine ([LINK](#))

This resource covers clinical use, patient harm, prescribing (initiation, formulations), monitoring, clozapine toxicity, adverse effects, interactions, missed doses, swallowing difficulties, pregnancy and breastfeeding, and patient and carer engagement.

Managing the risks associated with patients prescribed clozapine ([LINK](#))

Healthcare professionals in non-specialist services managing patients prescribed clozapine should implement safe practice principles to prevent potential harms. This resource covers patient harm, system wide and sector specific risks, and mitigation.

It is important to record all medicines prescribed by the hospital (for which the hospital retain prescribing responsibility) on the GP prescribing system individual patient record. A guide for how to record hospital prescribed medicines on GP prescribing systems can be found on the ICB website. [LINK](#)

3. MHRA drug safety update: Warfarin: be alert to the risk of drug interactions with tramadol [LINK](#)

Taking warfarin and tramadol together can cause harmful drug interactions, which can raise the International Normalised Ratio (INR), and result in severe bruising and bleeding, which in some patients could be fatal.

4. World Health Organization (WHO) issues warning on falsified medicines used for diabetes treatment and weight loss [LINK](#)

WHO has been observing increased demand for semaglutide medicines as well as reports on falsification. This alert addresses 3 falsified batches of product (Ozempic), which have been detected in several countries, including Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Local guidance

5. Wessex Adult, Adolescent & Paediatric Asthma Guidelines

The new Wessex Asthma Guidelines are now available to access on the Hampshire & Isle of Wight ICB Website here: [Respiratory and sustainability :: NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight \(icb.nhs.uk\)](#)

During May 2024, the HIOW ICB Medicines Optimisation Team hosted two 'Respiratory Masterclasses' to introduce the new guidelines, and support colleagues to embed these into practice. If you would like to watch the recordings of these, you can do so here:

Respiratory Masterclass 1: Adults <https://youtu.be/9mFfsPaN6gQ>

Respiratory Masterclass 2: Paediatrics <https://youtu.be/DOzogbsoy6Q>

6. Formulary updates

Cytisine for nicotine dependence – Green ([LINK](#))

Cytisine for nicotine dependence has been added to the formulary for prescribing in primary and secondary care (green status). Local Public Health advise GPs should only prescribe cytisine:

- as a second line treatment for people who have already tried Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) with behavioural support
- alongside the provision of specialist behavioural support by a smoking cessation service
- as a course of treatment for 25 days (as per product licence)

Ivermectin for scabies – Amber recommended ([LINK](#))

Ivermectin formulary status has been updated to suitable for prescribing in primary care following recommendation by a specialist (Amber recommended), for the treatment of scabies in those 15kg and over.

Ivermectin remains Red For the treatment of scabies in those under 15kg and for all non-scabies indications.

7. Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) guidelines ([LINK](#))

Please note the CKD guidelines have been updated to include the latest advice on medication use from NICE and local experts. They give a clear treatment pathway for managing patients in primary care.

8. Rimegepant prescribing guidelines ([LINK](#))

Please see the link above for the rimegepant prescribing guidelines. The guidelines contain a summary of the migraine treatment guidance and advice on how to prescribe rimegepant for acute and prophylaxis treatment.

9. Interim update - Melatonin Shared Care Guideline (SCG) ([LINK](#))

Please note the interim update of the melatonin SCG now includes Portsmouth and the Southeast in the guideline to reflect which areas the SCG currently covers. The guideline is under Basingstoke, Southampton, Winchester and Portsmouth and Southeast localities on the website. The melatonin guidelines will be reviewed as part of the sleep pathway review which will look at melatonin provision across the ICB.

10. Medicines Shortages on ICB website page [LINK](#)

Advice for healthcare professional regarding medicines shortages can be found on the ICB website. This includes a patient information leaflet about medication shortages [LINK](#)

National guidance

11. QIVr flu vaccine not available for 2024/25 flu vaccine programme

The recombinant quadrivalent influenza vaccine (QIVr) will **not be available** for this year's **adult** flu vaccination programme. Sanofi will contact their customers directly about this.

An amendment has been made to the [National Flu Immunisation Programme 2024-2025 letter](#) setting out the alternative vaccines that providers can order for the adult programme based on JCVI recommendations. The amendment also signposts to the [updated list of influenza vaccines](#) marketed in the UK for 2024/25 which includes manufacturers' contact details.

For older adults this now includes use of the high-dose quadrivalent influenza vaccine (QIV-HD) which will be available in 2024 to 2025 in the UK market. Alternatively, further orders of other first line vaccines, the adjuvanted quadrivalent influenza vaccine (aQIV) for those aged 65+ and cell-based quadrivalent influenza vaccine (QIVc) for those under 65 years, should be made.

The full amendment to the annual flu letter is available here: [National flu immunisation programme plan 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

12. UK HSA Guidance

Complete routine immunisation schedule ([LINK](#))

The routine immunisation schedule was revised in July 2024 in order to reflect changes to the prenatal pertussis (Tdap) and adolescent MenACWY vaccines.

Routine childhood immunisations from 1 July 2024 ([LINK](#))

The childhood schedule has been revised in order to reflect changes to the prenatal pertussis (Tdap) and adolescent MenACWY vaccines.

Pertussis (whooping cough) vaccination programme for pregnant women: information for healthcare practitioners ([LINK](#))

Guidance updated to reflect the change to use of the low dose tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis vaccine (ADACEL) for pregnant women from 1 July 2024. Any remaining stocks of Boostrix-IPV should be used for the pre-school booster programme in primary care.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccination programme ([LINK](#))

UKHSA have produced documents relating to the new respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccination programmes, which will be introduced from 1st September 2024. The new programmes include older adults aged 75 to 79 years old, and pregnant women.

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On behalf of Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB Medicines Optimisation Teams**

Local medicines optimisation teams can be contacted via their generic team mailbox: See [LINK](#)

Previous bulletins can be found hosted on the ICS website here: [LINK](#)