

Derbyshire Medicines Management  
Clinical Effectiveness bulletin  
Information relevant for Primary care

Bulletin 10  
5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Recognising the impact COVID-19 on all aspect of our work life, the Derbyshire CPD team have put a bulletin together of relevant COVID-19 information, for the Derbyshire wide primary care Health Community. As an interim measure this bulletin will supersede the monthly JAPC bulletin

See <http://www.derbyshiremedicinesmanagement.nhs.uk/medicines-management/coronavirus-covid-19> for all COVID-19 related information

### COVID evidence

**COVID-19 mortality in patients with cancer on chemotherapy or other anticancer treatments: a prospective cohort study.** Lee L, Cazier JB, Starkey T, Turnbull CD, UK Coronavirus Cancer Monitoring Project Team.

The Lancet, 28 May 2020. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)31173-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31173-9).

Analysis of data from 800 UK patients with cancer and symptomatic COVID-19 found 52% had a mild disease course. Receipt of chemotherapy within 4 weeks of the positive test (35%) was not associated with increased mortality from Covid-19 disease (OR 1.18 [0.81-1.72]; p=0.380).

The authors additionally found no evidence to suggest recent receipt of any other type of anticancer therapy (immunotherapy, hormonal therapy, targeted therapy, radiotherapy) was associated with mortality. However the number of patients receiving these treatments was smaller and further data with higher patient numbers are required to confirm or refute these findings. The researchers suggest that their findings strongly suggest that mortality in patients with cancer and Covid-19 is principally driven by advancing age and the presence of other non-cancer comorbidities, and that “withholding effective cancer treatments during the pandemic runs the very real risk of increasing cancer morbidity and mortality, perhaps much more so than COVID-19 itself.

**Covid-19: Test and trace programmes are important but no ‘silver bullet’** *BMJ 2020;369:m2151*

A data analytics group convened by the Royal Society (DELVE) warns that Covid-19 test and trace programmes can only help control the UK epidemic if they are effectively implemented and form part of a wider package of interventions. DELVE estimates that contact tracing for confirmed cases would reduce the number of new infections by 5-15%. But it warned that the upper end of this range can only be achieved when the time it takes to test someone and trace their contacts takes no more than three days, as then infected contacts will be quarantined before they become most infectious.

### MHRA

**Early Access to Medicines Scheme for remdesivir in the treatment of COVID-19. Implementation of the scheme and management of supply.**

A positive Scientific Opinion for remdesivir in the treatment of COVID-19 has been published by the MHRA. It advises on the conditions where the technology will be used and commissioned by the NHS.

The access criteria for the remdesivir EAMS have been amended to reflect developing clinical experience and knowledge of demand and changes in medicine supply. For the NHS in England new registrations to the EAMS have now closed: initial stock allocations have been made. Trusts must retrospectively complete a remdesivir Blueteq form to register patients who have received remdesivir in order to receive further medicine supply.

**Supply Disruption Alert: Danazol 100mg and 200mg capsules**

Danazol capsules have been discontinued in the UK and remaining supplies of both strengths are now exhausted. Limited quantities of unlicensed supplies have been sourced. The alert contains advice on the management of affected patients.

**Supply Disruption Alert: Zyban® (bupropion hydrochloride) 150mg prolonged release tablets**

Zyban® (bupropion hydrochloride) 150mg prolonged release tablets will be out of stock from week commencing 15th June 2020 until the end of November 2020. Unlicensed supplies have been sourced. The alert contains advice on the management of affected patients.

## Primary care

### **Anticoagulation directive**

The CCG, along with NHS providers, have received correspondence from NHSE/NHSI Commercial Medical Director dated 27th May 2020 requesting the supply of direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs) during COVID-19 in appropriate patients. These are only for patients switching directly from warfarin to a DOAC (unless there is a patient specific clinical reason to do otherwise). The letter is specific to the use of apixaban and rivaroxaban upon reaching an agreed discounted price. Our current local Derbyshire guidance is that edoxaban remains the preferred DOAC for Atrial Fibrillation management.

In view of the NHSE/NHSI letter we are reviewing our position both internally at the CCG and also at the Derbyshire Joint Area Prescribing Committee (JAPC) which involves key local stakeholders, on the 9th June 2020 for a formal decision. In this interim period we ask that clinicians are mindful of this statement and where appropriate hold switching patients from warfarin to a NOAC/DOAC unless clinically indicated until further local guidance is issued. This statement will be communicated to clinicians through the Medicines Management newsletter and other routes.

### **VOKE – BLACK not recommended or commissioned in Derbyshire. Smoking cessation services are commissioned by the local authority.**

Nicotine replacement therapy, breath-activated metered dose inhaler. The Voke inhaler mimics a traditional cigarette through both its packaging and administration but differs from an e-cigarette as it is a non-electronic device which delivers a low dose of nicotine without vaporisation. It is indicated to aid smokers, including pregnant and lactating women, wishing to quit or reduce prior to quitting as a safer alternative to smoking. Voke can be purchased directly by patients at a cost comparable to cigarettes.

No efficacy studies were conducted, but some pharmacodynamic measures regarding cravings were included in one pharmacokinetic study. This study consisted of four parts (A-D), two assessing Voke inhaler alone (n=18, Part A, and n=18, Part C), and two assessing Voke inhaler versus the reference product, Nicorette 10 mg<sup>®</sup> Inhalator (n=24, Part B, n=24, Part D). This study did not include any evidence for effectiveness in smoking cessation (i.e. reduction of smoked cigarettes).

Prescribers are advised to refer patients to the local Stop Smoking Services (City Service & County Service). Further details about each service can be found in the links below:

- Derby County: <http://www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk/>
- Derby city: [www.livewellderby.co.uk](http://www.livewellderby.co.uk)

## National bulletins

### **[Can breastfeeding mothers take ibuprofen?](#)**

This updated Medicines Q&A evaluates the available evidence for the safety of ibuprofen in breastfeeding mothers, and includes relevant advice in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

### **Useful COVID-19 Resources**

Information around medicines use in COVID-19 is changing rapidly. Most recent information produced by the government and the RPS can be accessed using the links below:

<https://www.rpharms.com/coronavirus>

<https://www.nice.org.uk/covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mhra-guidance-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

And finally

In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity.

—Sun Tsu

These difficult times are giving us the opportunity to look inward, reflect on what truly matters, and connect with ourselves and our loved ones on a deeper level.