

Derbyshire Medicines Management
Clinical Effectiveness bulletin
Information relevant for Primary care

Bulletin 9
29th May 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

[Features of 20 133 UK patients in hospital with covid-19 using the ISARIC WHO Clinical Characterisation Protocol: prospective observational cohort study](#)

This large prospective study of patients in hospital with Covid-19 continues to enrol patients. The commonest co-morbidities in these patients included chronic cardiac disease (31%), uncomplicated diabetes (21%), non-asthmatic chronic pulmonary disease (18%), and chronic kidney disease (16%). Aside from chronic co-morbidities, factors associated with higher in-hospital mortality included increasing age, male sex and obesity. The authors note that the observed mortality is higher than that seen in almost all other studies, and that this could be due to the older age of the cohort (median 73 years), health system differences, and practices for advanced care planning.

A linked editorial notes that better information is needed on care before, during and beyond the hospital, and that physicians need guidance about prevention, transmission, monitoring, home care, integration with primary care, risk factors for clinical worsening and criteria for escalating patients to emergency care.

[Should azithromycin be used to treat COVID-19? A rapid review](#)

A rapid review of the evidence for the effectiveness and safety of azithromycin in treating COVID-19. Three studies were included in the review. The authors conclude there is no evidence to support the use of azithromycin for the treatment of COVID-19 outside of the context of clinical trials, unless it is used to treat bacterial super-infection. There is extremely limited evidence of a possible synergy between azithromycin and hydroxychloroquine. The adverse events profile of azithromycin in the context of COVID-19 has not yet been established.

[Hydroxychloroquine in patients with COVID-19: A Systematic Review and meta-analysis](#)

Highlights of the systematic review

- The role of hydroxychloroquine in the treatment of COVID-19 is not fully known.
- While initial studies with hydroxychloroquine showed some ray of hope, recent studies that have emerged found either no benefit or a possible harm in COVID-19.
- This meta-analysis showed no benefit on viral clearance, although a significant increase in death was observed with hydroxychloroquine in patients with COVID-19, compared to the control.

Care homes

[Care Home Resource Hub](#)

The Specialist Pharmacy Service has collated relevant national advice and guidance into one easily accessible hub to support pharmacy teams working in care homes during the coronavirus pandemic.

National bulletins

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): new dedicated Yellow Card reporting site for medicines and medical devices](#)

The MHRA has launched a dedicated COVID-19 Yellow Card reporting site, to allow rapid identification new and emerging side effects and medical device incidents in COVID-19 treatment, including side effects for medicines taken to manage long-term or pre-existing conditions.

Primary care

Orthotics Service - Change of Service Delivery. Orthotics has previously been provided by UHDB, Chesterfield Royal and DCHS without any service specification. Following procurement last year, Blatchford will now provide the service in line with the national orthotics specification. Premises are expected to remain the same for DCHS/Chesterfield patients, but only diabetic MDT and some paediatric clinics will continue to be offered at UHDB. The new main orthotic hub shall be based at The Derby & Derbyshire Orthotic Service, The Derwent Valley Medical Centre, 18 St Marks Road, Derby DE21 6AH. The anticipated start date is 1st June and full comms will be circulated to GP practice staff including referral forms for clinical systems next week. There is work taking place to ensure a smooth transition and review any referral backlogs to support prioritisation of the service following virtual patient contact wherever possible.

The national flu immunisation programme 2020/21

A letter from the DHSC sets out which groups are eligible for flu vaccination and sets out actions to prepare for this autumn's vaccination campaign. Further guidance will be issued in September 2020. In 2020/21 groups eligible are the same as last year, although this may change if the programme is expanded, and includes:

- all children aged two to ten (but not eleven years or older) on 31 August 2020
- those aged six months to under 65 years in clinical risk groups
- pregnant women
- those aged 65 years and over
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- health and social care staff employed by a registered residential care/nursing home, registered domiciliary care provider, or a voluntary managed hospice provider.

Further guidance on universal vaccination of health and care workers will be published in due course

Activheal Hydrogel

Activheal Hydrogel has been approved by clinical cell in place of Aquaform Gel which was de-listed without notification. It was the formulary product on the previous wound formulary and is the next cheapest option via NHS Supplies.

Biscodyl 5mg tablets

Change to the licence for bisacodyl 5mg tablets now states it should not be used in children <12 years. The SPC also warns against long-term everyday use of stimulant laxatives due to potential harm to the intestinal function.

New NICE guidance

NICE ES24 - COVID-19 rapid evidence summary: ACEIs or ARBs in people with or at risk of COVID-19. Two retrospective observational studies found no increase in risk of developing COVID-19 or more severe disease in association with ACEI or ARB use. The studies were however of poor quality and subject to bias and confounding, so no robust conclusions can be drawn.

NICE ES25 - COVID-19 rapid evidence summary: Long-term use of NSAIDs for people with or at risk of COVID-19. This review found no studies suitable for inclusion; there is therefore currently no evidence from published scientific studies to determine whether long-term use of NSAIDs is related to increased risk of developing COVID-19 or increased risk of more severe COVID-19.

NG174 - children and young people who are immunocompromised

NICE have added information about reviewing immunosuppressant medicines. These should be reviewed if a child or young person may have COVID-19 or there are medical concerns. Also included is the latest government advice on shielding.

NG167 - rheumatological autoimmune, inflammatory and metabolic bone disorders

NICE have amended recommendation 3.2 to highlight that decisions on stopping some medicines needs to take account of the advice in NG174. Also aligned recommendation 1.4 with latest advice on shielding, and social distancing across the UK.

And finally

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

This iconic quote resonates perfectly at this moment in time, when we are all challenged to be our best selves.