

The purpose of the Medicines Management newsletter is to deliver succinct, evidence-based advice and information on primary care prescribing issues. Aimed at busy prescribers wanting to know key messages from the many publications in the previous month.

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This issue	Item 1	What's in the news
	Item 2	Drug Safety Update- MHRA and Drug deletions
	Item 3	Local news
	Item 4	QIPP
	Item 5	NICE evidence summaries: unlicensed/off-label medicines
	Item 6	Useful resources

## 1. What's in the news

Articles relevant to primary care

For full access to the DTB articles login via Open Athens those without accounts:

<https://openathens.nice.org.uk/>

[DTB Select: 10 | October 2014](#)

### 1. **Dose-effect of inhaled corticosteroid on growth rates of children**

DTB reports on a Cochrane review suggesting that the use of inhaled corticosteroids is associated with a dose-dependent difference in growth rate in children. However, it's uncertain from this review whether this affects a child's final height. The review included the use of beclometasone, budesonide, ciclesonide, fluticasone propionate or mometasone in mild to moderate asthma. However a separate Cochrane review did conclude that "daily use of inhaled corticosteroid can cause a small reduction in height in children up to 18 years of age with persistent asthma" but that the difference was small and the benefits outweigh the risks associated with asthma.

### 2. **Concerns over use of combination treatment with antiplatelets and oral anticoagulants for atrial fibrillation**

A study of atrial fibrillations across Europe was undertaken to assess the appropriateness of anticoagulation with antiplatelet use using European Society of Cardiology guidelines as standards. The study highlighted the need to regularly review patients receiving a combination of an oral anticoagulant and antiplatelet to ensure that there is a clear indication for their use. Local [atrial fibrillation](#) guideline allows the use of such combinations usually on the advice of a consultant cardiologist. Prescribers are encouraged to record the duration of such treatment in patient notes.

[Public Health England](#)

#### 1. **Ebola**

Ebola has featured heavily in the media and there are many sources of information not all reliable, clinicians may find the following websites and links more useful.

- [NHS Choices](#)
- [Department of health- UK government response](#)
- [The World Health Organization](#)
- [Public Health England](#)

[Deleted products from MIMS](#)

Defanac SR (diclofenac), Dulcobalance (macrogol), Generaid, Generaid Plus, Gynest cream (estriol), Pardelprin MR, indometacin), Polytar range, Vantas (histrelin acetate), Vistide (cidofovir), Voltarol Active (diclofenac)

**2. Drug Safety Update** relating to primary care prescribing  
(For more information see [Drug Safety Update : MHRA](#) ) Volume 8, Issue 3, October 2014

**Interferon beta: risk of thrombotic microangiopathy and risk of nephrotic syndrome**

Thrombotic microangiopathy and nephrotic syndrome reports are being linked to interferon beta treatment. Although these treatments are prescribed by specialist centres primary care clinicians whose patients are on interferon beta treatment should be vigilant for signs and symptoms of thrombotic microangiopathy.

**Dexamethasone 4 mg/ml injection (Organon Laboratories Limited): reformulation with changes in name, concentration, storage conditions, and presentation**

From October 2014 Dexamethasone 4 mg/ml injection (Organon Laboratories Limited) will be replaced with a new formulation called Dexamethasone 3.8 mg/ml solution for injection (Aspen Pharma Trading Limited). As a result, the storage conditions, presentation, and packaging will change

**Advice for healthcare professionals:**

- Take the new concentration of dexamethasone (3.8 mg/ml) into account when diluting the product for use
- Store the reformulated product in a refrigerator at 2 to 8°C
- Use up your stocks of the old formulation before using the new formulation
- Consult the new summary of product characteristics, technical information leaflet, and dosing card for further information

UKMI has produced a document that summarises the differences between the products containing dexamethasone – see [here](#)

**3. Local News and GP queries**

**GP query**

Request to prescribe a menstrual cup on prescription. Is this appropriate?

**Answer**

Any food, drug, toiletry or cosmetic may be prescribed unless it appears on the NHS blacklist. A product registered as a medical device can only be prescribed if it is listed in part IX of the Drug Tariff (DT). Menstrual cups do not appear to fit into the category of a toiletry and is not listed in the DT as a medical device that could be prescribed (further confirmed by the Prescription Pricing Division). It is therefore not appropriate to prescribe and the patient should be advised to purchase the item over the counter if they wish to use it.

**4. QiPP**

**STOPP/START criteria for potentially inappropriate prescribing in older people: version 2** Age and Ageing

2014; 0: 1–6doi: 10.1093/ageing/afu145 Denis O'Mahony et al

Some prescribers may be aware of the "STOPP/ START" intervention tool used to identify medication (to initiate or stop) where the risks outweigh the benefits in the elderly. Version 1 published in 2008 has been further updated based on up-to-date literature and consensus Version 2 now includes 80 STOPP criteria and 34 START criteria.

**Qof Changes**

The BMA has issued a summary of [QOF changes](#). Note that the atrial fibrillation indicators have been brought into line with NICE AF guideline over the recommendation of not to recommend antiplatelets solely for the prevention of stroke.

**5. NICE Evidence summaries: New medicines and unlicensed/off-label** relating to primary care prescribing

**New medicines**

None

**Unlicensed/ off-label reviews**

**Management of vomiting in children and young people with gastroenteritis: ondansetron**

A Cochrane review of antiemetic treatment for children and young people with acute gastroenteritis found oral or intravenous ondansetron increased the proportion of children and young people who stopped vomiting compared with placebo. Oral ondansetron also reduced the proportion of children and young people needing intravenous fluid therapy and reduced the immediate hospital admission rate compared with placebo.

Ondansetron was associated with increased episodes of diarrhoea

## 6. Useful resources

BMJ	<a href="http://www.thebmj.com">www.thebmj.com</a>
JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association	<a href="http://jama.ama-assn.org/">http://jama.ama-assn.org/</a>
The Lancet	<a href="http://www.thelancet.com">www.thelancet.com</a>
The New England Journal of Medicine	<a href="http://content.nejm.org/">http://content.nejm.org/</a>
<p>BMJ, JAMA and NEJM can be accessed in full-text directly through your NHS Athens Account via:            National Library for Health:            search via My Journals            MyAthens:            Via National Library for Health Resources or Local Resources.            Current Lancet articles are sometimes available with free registration from <a href="http://www.thelancet.com/content/register">http://www.thelancet.com/content/register</a>.            Print copies of The Lancet are available at DCGH library.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.library.nhs.uk">www.library.nhs.uk</a></p> <p>or</p> <p><a href="http://www.athens.ac.uk">www.athens.ac.uk</a></p>
<p>If you have not already registered for an NHS Athens Account, please register at:            NB: It is recommended that you register on a Trust (NHS) PC for speedy confirmation of your username a password. Once registered, your account can be accessed from any computer with online access.</p>	<a href="https://register.athensams.net/nhs/nhseng/">https://register.athensams.net/nhs/nhseng/</a>
<p>UKMI</p> <p>Nathnac            NHS evidence            Electronic medicines compendium            Clinical Knowledge Summaries            Medicines Prescribing Centre (Formerly NPC)            Medicines for children (patient information leaflets)</p> <p>Drugs in lactation</p>	<p><a href="http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk/">http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk/</a>  <a href="https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?om=%5B%7B%22srn%22%3A%5B%22%20ukmi%20%22%5D%7D%5D">https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?om=%5B%7B%22srn%22%3A%5B%22%20ukmi%20%22%5D%7D%5D</a>  <a href="http://www.nathnac.org/">http://www.nathnac.org/</a>  <a href="http://www.evidence.nhs.uk/">http://www.evidence.nhs.uk/</a>  <a href="http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/">http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/</a>  <a href="http://www.cks.nhs.uk">www.cks.nhs.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.nice.org.uk/mpc/">http://www.nice.org.uk/mpc/</a>  <a href="http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/">http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.midlandsmedicines.nhs.uk/content.asp?section=6&amp;subsection=17&amp;pageldx=1">http://www.midlandsmedicines.nhs.uk/content.asp?section=6&amp;subsection=17&amp;pageldx=1</a></p>
UK teratology services	<a href="http://www.uktis.org/index.html">http://www.uktis.org/index.html</a>
Vaccine update- Vaccination newsletter for health professionals and immunisation practitioners	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/series/vaccine-update">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/series/vaccine-update</a>