

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.

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

1. Round up of what's in the news

Anticonvulsants in the treatment of low back pain and lumbar radicular pain: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Enke O, New HA, New CH, Mathieson S, et al

CMAJ July 03, 2018 190 (26) E786-E793; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.171333>

The use of anticonvulsants (e.g. gabapentin, pregabalin) to treat low back pain has increased substantially in recent years despite limited supporting evidence.

Review (9 RCTs; n=859) found no effect of anticonvulsants (topiramate, gabapentin or pregabalin) vs placebo on pain scales for chronic low back pain in short term (mean difference -0.0, 95% CI -0.8 to 0.7) or lumbar radicular pain in immediate term (-0.1; -0.7 to 0.5).

There is moderate- to high-quality evidence that anticonvulsants are ineffective for treatment of low back pain or lumbar radicular pain. There is high-quality evidence that gabapentinoids have a higher risk for adverse events

The local guidance for the [management of non-malignant chronic pain in primary care](#) references only gabapentin as an option after paracetamol, NSAIDs and tricyclic antidepressants.

Risk Factors, Mortality, and Cardiovascular Outcomes in Patients with Type 2 Diabetes

Rawshani A, Rawshani A, Franzén S, Sattar N et al

August 16, 2018 N Engl J Med 2018; 379:633-644 DOI: [10.1056/NEJMoa1800256](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa1800256)

Patients with diabetes are at higher risk for death and cardiovascular outcomes than the general population. This study investigated whether the excess risk of death and cardiovascular events among patients with type 2 diabetes could be reduced or eliminated.

Swedish cohort study (n=271174) noted that patients with type 2 diabetes who had 5 risk-factor variables (elevated HbA1C, LDL-cholesterol and BP, albuminuria, smoking) within target ranges appeared to have little/no excess risk of death, MI, or stroke, vs. general population.

This study reinforces the message from national guidance regarding the importance of tackling these 5 key areas when managing type 2 diabetes.

Exacerbations and symptom control in chronic asthma: inhaled corticosteroids and long-acting beta agonists as maintenance and reliever therapy

Sobieraj DM, Weeda ER, Nguyen E et al.

JAMA. 2018 Apr 10;319(14):1485-1496. doi: [10.1001/jama.2018.2769](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2018.2769).

A systematic review and meta-analysis considered the combined use of inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) and long-acting beta agonists (LABA) as maintenance and reliever therapy (MART) in adults and children with uncontrolled chronic asthma. The MART regimen was associated with a lower risk of asthma exacerbations compared with maintenance therapy of the same or higher dose of ICS (with or without a LABA). There were a number of limitations to this review and evidence in children was limited. **The results of this study support NICE guidance on chronic asthma management which recommends MART as a cost-effective treatment option for children and adults.**

Safer Prescribing and Care for the Elderly (SPACE): a pilot study in general practice;

Wallis KA, Elley CR, Moyes S and Kerse N. BJGP Open 10 July 2018; [bjgpopen18X101594](https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgpopen18X101594).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgpopen18X101594>

Pilot study in two general practices of patients at increased risk of an ADR from NSAIDs and/or antiplatelets found that SPACE prompts medicines review and shows promising signs of supporting safer prescribing in general practice in the short term. An RCT is underway.

UKMI comments: The SPACE intervention comprised automated practice audit to identify and generate for each GP a list of patients with high-risk prescribing for these medicines; an outreach visit by clinical advisory pharmacist to deliver education and to go through with each GP their list of at-risk patients and indicate in a tick-box the intended action for each patient; and a mail-out from GPs to selected patients containing a medicines information brochure and a letter encouraging patients to discuss their medicines when they next see their GP.

These potential ADRs (NSAIDs and /or antiplatelets) are currently part of the PINCER trial prescribing quality scheme for SDCCG and ECCG.

Association between physical exercise and mental health in 1.2 million individuals in the USA between 2011 and 2015: a cross-sectional study

The Lancet, Psychiatry. August 08, 2018 DOI:https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(18)30227-X

Study of 1.2m people in US found exercising was linked to reduced self-reported mental health burden. More exercise was not always linked to better mental health, and there was evidence for optimal ranges of duration (45 min) and frequency (between three and five times per week).

Deleted products 2018 | MIMS online for July & August 2018

July 2018		
Eperzan (albiglutide)	Medabon (mifepristone/ misoprostol)	PVA 1.4% Tubilux (polyvinyl alcohol)
Galenphol Paed Linctus (pholcodine)	Neocate Active	Tradene (ethinylestradiol/gestodene, phasic)
GlucNavii	Neutrogena Norwegian Formula	
August 2018		
Agrippal (influenza vaccine)	Inactivated Influenza Vaccine BP	Rewisca (pregabalin)
Asacol Suppositories (mesalazine)	Lodotra (prednisone)	Sterac
Haelan cream (fludroxycortide)	PKU Maxamaid	Sterac water
Haelan ointment (fludroxycortide)	Reopro (abciximab)	Volsaid Retard (diclofenac)

2. Drug safety update primarily relating to primary care prescribing
(For more information see [Drug Safety Update](#))

Volume 11 Issue 12 July 2018

Pressurised metered dose inhalers (pMDI): risk of airway obstruction from aspiration of loose objects.

Prescribers should remind patients to check and remove the mouthpiece cover properly before inhaling a dose and to shake the inhaler to remove loose objects that may have become trapped in the inhaler during storage. The mouthpiece cover should be replaced securely after use. The MHRA have received reports of patients who have inhaled objects into the back of the throat, resulting in coughing. In some cases, objects were aspirated, causing airway obstruction.

Medicines taken during pregnancy: please report suspected adverse drug reactions, including in the baby or child, on a Yellow Card.

Report to the Yellow Card Scheme suspected adverse reactions associated with medicines taken during pregnancy experienced by women or the baby or child. Obstetricians and midwives have a particularly important role in providing data about pregnancy outcomes – your reports are essential to improving understanding of the safety of medicines for women and children.

Volume 12 Issue 1 August 2018

Esmya (ulipristal acetate) and risk of serious liver injury: new restrictions to use and requirements for liver function monitoring before, during, and after treatment

More than one treatment course is authorised only in women who are not eligible for surgery, and liver function monitoring is to be carried out in all women treated with Esmya. Before initiation, discuss with women the rare risk of liver damage and advise them to seek urgent medical attention if they develop any symptoms or signs of liver injury.

Restricted indication and new contra-indications are as follows:

Esmya is now indicated for the:

- intermittent treatment of moderate to severe symptoms of uterine fibroids in women of reproductive age who are not eligible for surgery
- one course of pre-operative treatment of moderate to severe symptoms of uterine fibroids in adult women of reproductive age
- Esmya treatment is to be initiated and supervised by a physician experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of uterine fibroids
- Esmya is contraindicated in women with underlying liver disorders

The current traffic light classification for Esmya is RED for uterine fibroids.

3. Local news and GP/pharmacist queries

GP QUERY

Question:

My practice has claimed in error using the FP34D Appendix form for vaccines that were obtained as part of the Childhood Immunisation Programme via central supplies, what can I do?

Answer:

If you have over claimed for vaccines on your appendix form or prescription items you should contact our Customer Payment Team who can look into this for you.

You can email the Customer Payment Team with details of your practice, the month the claim was sent with, what the item and brand was and how many were over claimed.

You can also write to the Customer Payment Team with the same information to:

Address:

Customer Payments Team
NHS Business Services Authority
Bridge House
152 Pilgrim Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 6SN

Adalat (Nifedipine) – shortage of supply (UKMI memo)

Bayer will be out of stock of most of the Adalat range as follows (supplies of 10mg immediate release capsules are not affected):

5mg immediate release capsules*- out of stock until Dec 2018
LA20mg tabs* – out of stock until Feb 2019
LA30mg tabs – out of stock from Oct 2018 to Apr 2019
LA 60mg tabs – out of stock until May 2019
Retard 10mg tabs – out of stock from Nov 2018 to May 2019
Retard 20mg tabs – out of stock until May 2019

*Bayer is the sole supplier of these two formulations

For further details regarding management options for immediate release and slow release preparations, see the [UKMI memo](#).

Short of supply code of practice

JAPC working group have produced a Derbyshire-wide short of [supply code of practice guidance](#). The document guides pharmacies, GP practices and patients about appropriate actions to be taken.

BLACK drugs policy

Derbyshire JAPC has produced a [BLACK drugs policy](#) for GPs on how to deal with requests from patients to prescribe a BLACK drug and how to deal with existing patients on black drug.

4. Medicines safety issues

Resources to support safe and timely management of hyperkalaemia (high level of potassium in the blood). Patient safety alert, August 2018

Potassium is essential for the body's normal function, including maintenance of normal heart rhythm. The way the body responds to hyperkalaemia – a higher than normal level of potassium in the blood – is unpredictable; arrhythmias and cardiac arrest can occur without warning. Hyperkalaemia can affect patients in hospital and being cared for at home.

Hyperkalaemia is a potentially life-threatening emergency which can be corrected with treatment.

This alert signposts to resources on the [NHS Improvement website](#) that can help organisations ensure their clinical staff have easily accessible information to guide prompt investigation, treatment and monitoring options.

The resources include an example of how hospitals could make this easier for their staff by pre-preparing sets of the equipment, guidance and medication they would need in an emergency. The resource webpage also includes short videos organisations can use to help frontline staff recognise that hyperkalaemia is a medical emergency and encourage them to familiarise themselves with local guidance and equipment.

While general practices will not need hyperkalaemia treatment protocols or equipment, they will need to ensure they implement all actions that will support the right response to any blood test results they receive indicating hyperkalaemia.

Local advice for the treatment of hyperkalaemia can be found on the [Derbyshire Shared Care pathology](#) website.

End of life care

Following a recent incident of incorrect dosage conversion of diamorphine to morphine for breakthrough pain relief, prescribers are reminded to follow the dose conversion chart for opioids and breakthrough pain relief doses available at the Derbyshire EOL website:

During the ongoing diamorphine shortage of 5mg and 10mg ampoules, prescribers are reminded to convert breakthrough pain relief doses to morphine at the earliest opportunity to avoid patient/carer anxiety and delays in required analgesia.

5. Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP)

Quetiapine XL – preferred branded generic for Derbyshire Brancico

The preferred branded generic for quetiapine XL across Derbyshire is Brancico. New patients and existing patients will be actively switched to this cost effective brand. The table below lists the NHS listed price for Brancico and drug tariff reimbursement price.

Brand name	Generic name	Zentiva branded price	Drug tariff reimbursement price	Potential saving per Rx
Brancico MR 50mg x 60 tablets	Quetiapine MR 50mg x 60 tablets	£12.00	£67.66	£55.66
Brancico MR 150mg x 60 tablets	Quetiapine MR 150mg x 60 tablets	£26.00	£113.10	£87.10
Brancico MR 200mg x 60 tablets	Quetiapine MR 200mg x 60 tablets	£26.00	£113.10	£87.10
Brancico MR 300mg x 60 tablets	Quetiapine MR 300mg x 60 tablets	£45.00	£170.00	£125.00
Brancico MR 400mg x 60 tablets	Quetiapine MR 400mg x 60 tablets	£60.00	£226.20	£166.20

July 2018 – price concessions

Prescribers should note that the re-imbursement price on FP10 may not necessarily reflect the Drug Tariff price as a result of a drug shortage. These concessionary prices are set by the Department of Health to reflect actual market prices.

A concession only lasts until the end of the month in which it was granted. If there is an on-going supply problem, it is possible that a new concession will be granted by the Department of Health the following month, however this is not guaranteed.

Drug	Pack size	Price concession	Drug tariff price
Amisulpride 200mg tablets	60	£14.00	£5.14
Amisulpride 50mg tablets	60	£6.00	£1.57
Amisulpride 100mg tablets	60	£9.95	£3.00
Brimonidine 0.2% eye drops	5ml	£3.00	£1.16
Bicalutamide 50mg tablets	28	£12.40	£11.20
Bicalutamide 150mg tablets	28	£11.99	£9.89
Co-codamol 30mg/500mg capsules	100	£4.52	£3.98
Diamorphine 10mg powder for solution for injection ampoules	5	£16.56	£10.91
Doxazosin 4mg tablets	28	£0.85	£0.74
Fexofenadine 180mg tablets	30	£2.99	£2.37
Lamotrigine 25mg tablets	56	£6.13	£1.11
Lamotrigine 100mg tablets	56	£15.00	£1.71
Lamotrigine 200mg tablets	56	£22.31	£2.12
Lamotrigine 50mg tablets	56	£8.50	£1.23
Latanoprost 50 micrograms/ml/timolol 5mg/ml eye drops	2.5ml	£5.05	£3.32
Latanoprost 50micrograms/ml eye drops	2.5 ml	£11.53	£1.60
Metronidazole 400mg tablets	21	£3.40	£2.15
Mometasone 0.1% Cream	100g	£8.36	£5.13
Mometasone 0.1% Cream	30g	£3.34	£1.54
Mometasone 0.1% Ointment 100g	100g	£8.21	£5.27
Nebivolol 5mg tablets	28	£2.99	£0.97
Nicorandil 10mg tablets	60	£3.70	£1.59
Nicorandil 20mg tablets	60	£6.00	£3.37
Orlistat 120mg capsules	84	£25.00	£14.46
Oxybutynin 2.5mg tablets	56	£2.23	£0.96
Oxybutynin 5mg tablets	56	£3.88	£1.21
Pioglitazone 15mg tablets	28	£4.20	£2.07
Pioglitazone 30mg tablets	28	£4.02	£3.04
Pioglitazone 45mg tablets	28	£3.80	£3.17

Propylthiouracil 50mg tablets	56	£38.00	£21.03
Ramipril 1.25mg tablets	28	£1.80	£1.31
Sodium Valproate 500mg gastro-resistant tablets	100	£15.40	£7.74
Sodium Valproate 200mg gastro-resistant tablets	100	£7.12	£4.40
Sodium Valproate 200mg/5ml oral solution SF	300 ml	£7.43	£4.60
Sumatriptan 100mg tablets	6	£5.05	£3.34
Sumatriptan 50mg tablets	6	£4.21	£2.43
Tadalafil 5mg tablets	28	£45.00	£5.66
Tolterodine 2mg tablets	56	£3.20	£3.04
Tolterodine 1mg tablets	56	£3.78	£2.41
Topiramate 25mg tablets	60	£5.45	£4.10
Topiramate 50mg tablets	60	£10.00	£6.47
Topiramate 100mg tablets	60	£14.00	£10.00

August 2018 – price concessions

Prescribers should note that the re-imburement price on FP10 may not necessarily reflect the Drug Tariff price as a result of a drug shortage. These concessionary prices are set by the Department of Health to reflect actual market prices.

A concession only lasts until the end of the month in which it was granted. If there is an on-going supply problem, it is possible that a new concession will be granted by the Department of Health the following month, however this is not guaranteed

Drug	Pack size	Price concession	Drug tariff price
Amisulpride 100mg tablets	60	£9.95	£3.46
Amisulpride 200mg tablets	60	£14.00	£5.93
Amisulpride 50mg tablets	60	£5.29	£1.81
Brimonidine 0.2% eye drops	5ml	£6.46	£1.35
Buprenorphine 2mg sublingual tablets sugar free	7	£4.78	£0.93
Buprenorphine 8mg sublingual tablets sugar free	7	£8.91	£2.08
Diamorphine 10mg powder for solution for injection ampoules	5	£16.56*	£12.57
Fexofenadine 180mg tablets	30	£2.99	£2.74
Hydroxocobalamin 1mg/1ml solution for injection ampoules	5	£9.00	£7.22
Latanoprost 50micrograms/ml eye drops	2.5ml	£10.25	£1.85
Lamotrigine 100mg tablets	56	£17.50	£1.98
Lamotrigine 200mg tablets	56	£25.00	£2.45
Lamotrigine 25mg tablets	56	£5.90	£1.28
Lamotrigine 50mg tablets	56	£8.30	£1.42
Levetiracetam 100mg/ml Oral Solution SF	300ml	£8.80	£7.20
Mometasone 0.1% Cream	30g	£2.87	£1.78
Mometasone 0.1% Cream	100g	£7.90	£5.93
Mometasone 0.1% Ointment	30g	£3.45	£1.83
Mometasone 0.1% Ointment	100g	£8.00	£6.10
Metronidazole 400mg tablets	21	£3.30	£2.48
Nebivolol 5mg tablets	28	£4.39	£1.13
Nicorandil 20mg tablets	60	£5.00	£3.89
Nicorandil 10mg tablets	60	£4.18	£1.84
Orlistat 120mg capsules	84	£23.95	£16.66
Oxybutynin 2.5mg tablets	56	£2.15	£1.11
Oxybutynin 5mg tablets	56	£3.65	£1.40
Propranolol 10mg tablets	28	£2.70	£1.01
Propranolol 40mg tablets	28	£2.64	£1.02
Ramipril 10mg tablets	28	£3.20	£0.98
Ramipril 1.25mg tablets	28	£1.75	£1.51
Ramipril 2.5mg tablets	28	£3.90	£1.16
Ramipril 5mg tablets	28	£4.20	£0.78
Risperidone 1mg tablets	20	£3.95	£0.61
Risperidone 2mg tablets	60	£6.00	£1.50
Risperidone 3mg tablets	60	£13.85	£1.75
Risperidone 4mg tablets	60	£14.02	£2.07
Risperidone 500microgram tablets	20	£1.90	£0.62
Sodium Valproate 200mg gastro-resistant tablets	100	£6.39	£5.07
Sodium Valproate 500mg gastro-resistant tablets	100	£15.00	£8.93
Sodium Valproate 200mg/5ml oral solution SF	300ml	£6.35	£5.31

Sumatriptan 50mg tablets	6	£4.92	£2.81
Sumatriptan 100mg tablets	6	£4.50	£3.86
Tadalafil 5mg tablets	28	£28.37	£6.53
Topiramate 100mg tablets	60	£13.50	£11.53
Topiramate 50mg tablets	60	£9.50	£7.46
Valsartan 160mg capsules	28	£14.73	£3.36
Valsartan 80mg capsules	28	£10.00	£3.34
Valsartan 40mg capsules	28	£5.95	£2.68

***Please note, this price has been updated since this story was first published due to an administrative error.**

6. NICE summaries: New medicines (relating to primary care prescribing)

July 2018 - Not relevant for primary care

August 2018

NG102 - Community pharmacies: promoting health and wellbeing

This guideline covers how community pharmacies can help maintain and improve people's physical and mental health and wellbeing, including people with a long-term condition. It aims to encourage more people to use community pharmacies by integrating them within existing health and care pathways and ensuring they offer standard services and a consistent approach. It requires a collaborative approach from individual pharmacies and their representatives, local authorities and other commissioners.

NG103 - Flu vaccination: increasing uptake

This guideline covers how to increase uptake of the free flu vaccination among people who are eligible. It describes ways to increase awareness and how to use all opportunities in primary and secondary care to identify people who should be encouraged to have the vaccination.

7. Useful resources

BMJ	www.thebmj.com
JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association	http://jama.ama-assn.org/
The Lancet	www.thelancet.com
The New England Journal of Medicine	http://content.nejm.org/
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 http://www.thelancet.com/content/register . Print copies of The Lancet are available at DCGH library.	www.library.nhs.uk or www.athens.ac.uk
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 and password. Once registered, your account can be accessed from any computer with online access.	https://register.athensams.net/nhs/nhseng/
UKMI Nathnac NHS evidence Electronic medicines compendium Clinical Knowledge Summaries Medicines Prescribing Centre (Formerly NPC) Medicines for children (patient information leaflets) Drugs in lactation	http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk/ https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?om=%5B%7B%22srn%22%3A%5B%22%20ukmi%20%22%5D%7D%5D http://www.nathnac.org/ http://www.evidence.nhs.uk/ http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/ www.cks.nhs.uk http://www.nice.org.uk/mpc/ http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/ http://www.midlandsmedicines.nhs.uk/content.asp?section=6&subsection=17&pageldx=1
UK teratology services	http://www.uktis.org/index.html
Vaccine update- Vaccination newsletter for health professionals and immunisation practitioners	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/series/vaccine-update