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Access to Palliative Care Webinars

The Palliative Care team are very keen to increase uptake of the webinars they have developed to support pharmacists in maintaining their competence to practice in this speciality. NES host the webinars on Vimeo, which is a site external to the NHS. In some locations it is apparent that access to the site has been blocked which would prevent staff from viewing the webinars during their working day. It would be helpful if any restriction on access to the following two sites could be relaxed to ensure staff are not at a disadvantage or patient care at risk of being compromised.

<https://vimeo.com/nhseducationforscotland>

A similar situation may also apply in those multiples where clinical/operational information distributed by CPDT can not be received by the intended recipient. Pharmacists are asked to check their ability to access these webinars and take the necessary action to remedy the situation. This format is becoming more popular in cascading information to a target audience with this trend likely to increase in the future

A Cautionary Tale

Community pharmacists are reminded of the need to alert prescribers accordingly should they become aware of similar risks to patient care. An 80 year old lollipop lady sadly collapsed and died after completing a 15-day course of treatment with miconazole mouth gel for a mouth infection after her dentist failed to flag up she had already been prescribed warfarin by her GP. The dentist told the subsequent inquest that he was aware his patient was on warfarin and knew it should not be mixed with some other medicines but could not explain why he came to miss the link between the two treatments. The Coroner reported that the deceased died from an intracerebral haemorrhage the effects of which may have been

contributed to by the combined use of warfarin and miconazole gel medications. He indicated he would write to several medical bodies including the NHS to highlight the potential dangers. Concomitant use of miconazole enhances the anticoagulant effect of the warfarin

NHSGGC "Ask About Your Medicines" Campaign 2016

The Polypharmacy Patient Information Group is launching an "Ask About Your Medicines" campaign in the New Victoria Hospital Patient Information Centre on 26 April 2016. The campaign will promote the important role that the local community pharmacist can provide in supporting patients taking multiple medications.

The aim of the campaign is to encourage patients to learn more about their medicines and gain a better understanding of their actions by asking their local pharmacist, doctor or nurse any questions they may have regarding their use.

Claire Langridge, Medicines for the Elderly Consultant, Glasgow Queen Elizabeth University Hospital and chair of the NHS GGC Polypharmacy Subgroup stated that "Up to 50% of prescribed drugs may not be taken as prescribed. There are many reasons for this and we are trying to encourage patients to ask some simple questions about their medicines "Do I really need this drug treatment schedule? What are the possible downsides? Are there other non drug options for treatment? What happens if I don't take these tablets?"

Each pharmacy will receive a supply of dispensing bags, a poster and a pad of medicines compliance charts week commencing 25th April. Messages on the posters and dispensing bags aim to prompt patients to speak to their pharmacist about their medication and can also be used by pharmacists to initiate the discussion with patients. The medication compliance charts, if deemed appropriate for the patient, can be used to assist patients in taking their medication. The letter accompanying the campaign materials contains further information.

Posters will be also distributed to GP practices for display in patient waiting areas to further promote the campaign.

Prescription for Excellence Newsletter

The Prescription for Excellence Programme continues to progress and recently published a newsletter to provide an update on current activity towards developing an enhanced role for pharmacists in delivering patient facing care. The newsletter can be accessed from the following webpage - <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/9155>

Valproate and risk of abnormal pregnancy outcomes: new communication materials

In January 2015, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) published new [information](#) and strengthened warnings around the safety of medicines related to valproate (sodium valproate, valproic acid and valproate semisodium). Children exposed to valproate in utero are at a 10% higher risk of developmental disorders and congenital malformations compared to 2-3% in the general population. The Medicines Update [blog](#) published last year contains further information on the scale and nature of the developmental and behavioural disorders that may result.

In February 2016, the MHRA issued additional information to increase the level of awareness.

What's new?

New [communication materials](#) are now available to use with female patients when prescribing valproate. It is important that healthcare professionals use these new materials to support discussion of the risks to women of childbearing potential and girls who take valproate.

Key messages for healthcare professionals

GPs

- Valproate treatment should be started and supervised by a specialist experienced in managing epilepsy or bipolar disorder and not initiated by a GP.
- Arrange treatment reviews with the relevant specialist for women of childbearing potential and girls who are currently taking valproate.
- Refer a woman who is taking valproate tells you she is pregnant or would like to have a baby to the specialist responsible for her care.

Pharmacists

- Supply a patient [card](#) to women of childbearing potential and girls when dispensing valproate unless they can confirm they already have a card.
- Encourage patients or parents/carers to read the card and enter the patient's name and date of when issued.
- Record date of issue on the patient's Pharmaceutical Care Record (PCR)

The following materials can be ordered directly from Sanofi by calling 0845 372 7101:

A [booklet](#) for healthcare professionals
A consultation [checklist](#)
A patient [guide](#)
A patient [card](#)

Valproate is now a [black triangle medicine](#) and any suspected side effects should be reported via the [Yellow Card](#) scheme

HIV anti-stigma campaign

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde continues to actively support the HIV Anti Stigma and Discrimination campaign launched in the autumn of 2015. Detailed information on the work being doing and the resources available to tackle and reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination can be found on the www.hivstigma.scot website. Patients have reported sometimes feeling stigmatised when accessing services with research revealing a real need to educate staff in general about the condition and the perceptions of risk.

In addition, the Brownlee Clinic on the Gartnavel General Hospital campus recently announced the launch of their new website containing full details and information on the range of services they currently provide to this patient group. The following link gives access to this new facility www.brownleehiv.org

.....Extra, Extra, Extra

In addition to the all new website dedicated to the Brownlee and featured above, The Sandyford Centre has also been active in developing websites for some of their services

Free Condoms service - A refreshed version of the website which is available at <http://www.freecondomsglasgowandclyde.org>

The Archway rape and sexual assault service - a new website for available at <http://archway.sandyford.org>

Steve Retson Project - further updates to the new project website available at <http://www.steveretsonproject.org.uk>

UKCPA/Pharmacy Management Joint Conference on Diabetes

The Pharmacy Management organisation recently formed a partnership with the United Kingdom Clinical Pharmacy Association (UKCPA) to deliver high quality conferences that meet the needs of Healthcare Professionals.

The first joint event will be held on Tuesday 17 May 2016 in Manchester and focuses on Diabetes with the opportunity to hear contributions from acknowledged experts in the speciality and participate in a number of workshops.

Pharmacy Management has worked closely with the Diabetes Specialist Interest Group of the UKCPA to deliver an impressive agenda which will be of value to colleagues in both the Primary Care and Secondary Care sectors of the NHS. A copy of the agenda can be accessed through the following link which can also be used to register for the event or gain more information -

www.pharman.co.uk/events/2016/5/mo-manchester

Home use blood glucose monitoring system: GlucoMen LX Sensor test strips - risk of over-estimation of blood glucose

Medical Device Alert MDA/2015/039 advised of a problem of possible over-estimation of blood glucose if test strips had been exposed to high humidity. The manufacturer has identified instances where users have obtained a falsely high blood glucose reading because of inappropriate storage of test strips and issued a Field Safety Notice in November 2015 stating that prolonged exposure of strips to high humidity may lead to incorrect (high) blood glucose readings.

The GlucoMen LX PLUS meter is primarily used by patients with type 1 diabetes who will use it also for ketone testing as one of the two meters recommended by GGC for this purpose. Most adult patients using the device will have been through the Daphne course and been educated on how to use the meter and be aware of the recommendation on storing the strips appropriately.

Community pharmacists are asked to ensure that their patients using this meter, or their carers are able to use this device and that they are aware of what to do if a result is out of their normal range.

To avoid false high readings, please advise them to follow the instructions for use, which includes making sure that the strips are not exposed to high environmental humidity for a prolonged period of time.

Users should always:

- > close the vial immediately after each use
- > store the test strips in their original vial
- > write the discard date on the vial label, which should be 9 months after the date of first opening the vial itself.

Alcohol and Pregnancy Update

Following recently revised guidelines, training for community pharmacy staff (developed by NHS GGC and Glasgow Council on Alcohol) was provided in March 2016. Subsequently, all GGC community pharmacies received:

- 20 supporting 'Alcohol before, during and after Pregnancy' leaflets
- 300 P4 prescription bags with alcohol and pregnancy health message
- 'Alcohol and Pregnancy' chapter for insertion into Public Health Resource folders, including how to reorder further leaflets and access training

NHS GGC Alcohol and Pregnancy Key Messages:

It is best to avoid alcohol when trying for a baby and when you are pregnant. No alcohol, no risk.

- Avoid alcohol completely if trying for a baby or pregnant
- Drinking alcohol can affect your fertility
- Alcohol can interfere with an unborn baby's healthy growth and development

Further Information, Resources and Support Alcohol Before, During & After Pregnancy Leaflet

This leaflet is a useful aid to support conversations around pregnancy and answers questions about the benefits of not drinking before, during and after pregnancy. It should be provided to anyone who asks for pregnancy related information.

To order further free copies of the leaflet, please use:

www.phrd.scot.nhs.uk/HPAC/Index.jsp

Glasgow Council on Alcohol

To access the Alcohol and Pregnancy Training content and information (from March 6th 2016) and for further information about Alcohol and Pregnancy, please use the following link (under 'Training Materials'):

www.glasgowcouncilonalcohol.org/communities-2/alcohol-and-pregnancy/

NHS Education for Scotland Foetal Alcohol Harm E-Learning Resource

This resource has been developed to support a range of activities led by the Scottish Government to substantially reduce the harm caused by alcohol consumption in pregnancy across Scotland. To access, please use:

www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/home/learning-and-cpd/learning-spaces/fasd.aspx

ZIKA Virus (ZIKV) -Updated advice to travellers visiting an affected country

The advice for travellers to ZIKV-affected countries has been updated as follows:

- mosquito bite avoidance is strongly recommended;
- travellers should seek advice from a healthcare provider at least six to eight weeks in advance of travel and particularly important for those pregnant or planning pregnancy;
- adequate insurance cover is strongly advised - pregnant women should check with their travel insurance company that they are covered under the policy.

Women who are pregnant are further advised:

- to postpone non-essential travel to countries with active ZIKV transmission until the proposed link between ZIKV and adverse pregnancy outcomes has been fully clarified;
- where travel is essential, women should understand the risks in order to make a fully informed decision;
- during travel, strict bite avoidance is essential. The use of barrier methods to prevent potential sexual transmission of ZIKV from a male partner during travel and throughout the pregnancy is also advised;
- on return, an early obstetric review is recommended even if well.

Further resources are also available on both TRAVAX (clinicians) and on fitfortravel (general public) websites –

www.travax.nhs.uk/

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/disease-prevention-advice/zika-virus-infection.aspx>

Cold Chain Self Audit – updated version now available

Maintenance of the cold chain for medicines requiring refrigeration is of the utmost importance and community pharmacies within NHSGGC have demonstrated excellent practice with year on year improvements on the results of the cold chain self audit achieved in the past.

The cold chain self audit module has been updated with the latest version available to download at <http://www.staffnet.ggc.scot.nhs.uk/Acute/Division%20Wide%20Services/Pharmacy%20and%20Prescribing%20Support%20Unit/Community%20Pharmacy/Documents/Cold%20Chain.pdf>.

The module is designed to be user friendly and would be a good project for any pharmacist, pre-registration student or technician/trainee to undertake. Any pharmacies wishing to use this module or any of the others in the suite should contact their designated members of the NHSGGC Community Pharmacy Audit Facilitator team for advice and assistance on completion.

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The Community Pharmacy Development Team has relocated to West Glasgow ACH Site. Contact details as follows:

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