

# PostScript – Primary Care

**December 2008**

**HOLIDAY ADDICTIONS SERVICES:** There are more “take-home” methadone doses than usual during Christmas and New Year. Most community pharmacies (not those in Health Centres) will be open on the Saturdays (27<sup>th</sup> of December and 3<sup>rd</sup> January). Please remind patients of the importance of safe storage of methadone. It should be kept out of reach and out of sight, locked away if possible. Controlled drug prescriptions for instalment dispensing must state the amount to be supplied per instalment and the interval between instalments. Directions for take home instalments must be unambiguous. The wording approved by the Home Office for supervised consumption is:

*“Instalments due on the days when pharmacy is closed should be dispensed on the day immediately prior to closure. Supervised consumption of daily dose on specified days: the remainder of supply to take home. If an instalment prescription covers more than one day and is not collected on the specified day, the total amount prescribed less the amount prescribed for the day(s) missed may be supplied.”*

An addiction services out of hours advisory service will be available to all staff over the holiday period. This is a professional to professional service for advice on addiction related matters on 0141 276 6600. It is available on 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> December and 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> January from 10am to 6pm.

**GPASS FORMULARY:** The e-Formulary for GPASS is currently undergoing beta-testing in practices across the health board. It is intended to roll out the e-Formulary to all practices with GPASS on a voluntary basis early in 2009 and further details about how to get it installed will appear in the next edition of PostScript Primary Care. The e-Formulary

offers clinicians the ability to ensure that Formulary medicines are considered as first line options, which can be of help in meeting prescribing indicators. It speeds up the prescribing process by suggesting standard adult doses for many of the medicines. It also allows prescribers to search for formulary medicines for specific common presentations using the disease code functionality, including a disease code which lists the most commonly prescribed paediatric medicines with suggested doses based on age.



**METHOTREXATE:** As part of the Safer Use of Medicines, a review of oral methotrexate prescriptions has been undertaken in relation to the recommendations contained in the National Patient Safety Agency alert: Improving Compliance with Oral Methotrexate Guidelines:

<http://www.npsa.nhs.uk/nrls/alerts-and-directives/alerts/oral-methotrexate/>

The review revealed a number of weekly methotrexate prescriptions containing large and excessive quantities and others with no directions. These prescriptions are being highlighted in letters to the relevant practices.

**Prescribers are recommended to limit weekly methotrexate prescriptions to a maximum of four weeks supply.**

**TACROLIMUS:** The [MHRA Drug Safety bulletin](#) recently highlights that there have been medication errors in relation to prescribing or dispensing of tacrolimus products resulting in rejection of transplant organs or toxicity. Prescribers should ensure that the correct formulation is prescribed as the two are not interchangeable without therapeutic monitoring and are available in the same strengths:

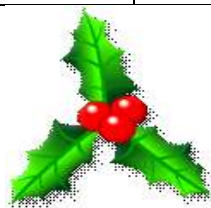
- Prograf<sup>®</sup> – immediate release given by twice daily dosing
- Advagraf<sup>®</sup> – prolonged release given once daily

Pharmacists should also ascertain which formulation is intended before dispensing.

**❄️ SEASONS GREETINGS FROM ALL AT THE GREATER GLASGOW AND CLYDE PRESCRIBING TEAM ❄️**

**CHCP UPDATED CONTACT DETAILS:**

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