Important New Evidence Service

In Partnership with The Centre for Medicines Optimisation at Keele University

ScriptSwitch Monthly Summary – Dec/Jan 2017/18

Monthly News Update: Scotland Edition

Welcome to the latest '***KINES' Monthly News Update: SCOTLAND EDITION.*** This update includes items relevant to healthcare professionals in Scotland, alongside selected articles from the 'KINES England' newsletter that may also be of interest.

Other recent KINES Updates have discussed (*login or register to access*):

- An analysis of data from GP practices in England and Wales that found evidence of underuse of QRISK2 to guide decisions on initiating statins.
- A case-control study reporting an increased risk of opioid-related death in people using opioids in combination with gabapentin.
- An investigation of antihypertensives, based on their potential impact on serum potassium, and the risk of cardiac arrest. Risk was higher in users of hypokalaemia-inducing, and a combination of hypo- and hyperkalaemia-inducing antihypertensives. However, given the limitations of this study, these findings should not undermine the important role of antihypertensives in reducing the risk of cardiovascular events.

Scotland Update:

- The Chief Medical Officer has written to Boards noting the current position with seasonal influenza and advising on the prescribing of antivirals as treatment. The letter can be read here and ongoing reports from Health Protection Scotland are available here.
- GlucoRx GO Professional Biosensor Blood testing strips have been added to the Scottish Drug Tariff at a cost of £9.95 per pack of 50.
- Health Protection Scotland (HPS) is urging caution in travellers to Romania, Italy and Germany, due to a large measles outbreak. Some areas of England have also been affected (*see below)*. Timely MMR vaccination continues to be important.
- The Scottish Patient Safety Programme (SPSP) medicines team is hosting an event in Edinburgh on the 8th of February, entitled *Reviewing the Prescription: What else can we do to reduce harm from medicines in Scotland?* Registration is now open. Further detail is available here.
- The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) is requesting feedback about what works well with the current versions of SIGN guidelines and what developments would be useful for future guidelines. The survey can be accessed here.
- Voting has closed on the proposed 2018 General Medical Service (GMS) contract. Further information is expected in the next few weeks. *Comment*: With the inclusion of the pharmacotherapy service within the offering, the outcome of the vote will have significant impact on prescribing support teams across NHS Scotland

Other Updates:

NICE

- NICE has published final guidance that naltrexone-bupropion (Mysimba) **is not recommended** for managing overweight and obesity. Uncertainties about the cost-effectiveness and long-term effectiveness of this treatment were noted by NICE.

Regulatory Agencies Safety Update

- The MHRA has issued a Drug Safety Update for eluxadoline (Truberzi), which is licensed for the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome with diarrhoea. Following reports of pancreatitis, eluxadoline should not be used in patients without a gallbladder or where there is a possibility of biliary tree/pancreatic duct obstruction (for example, gallstones) or sphincter of Oddi disease or dysfunction. Patients should be told to avoid drinking alcohol whilst on treatment, report any symptoms suggestive of pancreatitis (e.g. abdominal pain that may radiate to the back/shoulder, nausea, vomiting), and stop treatment if symptoms occur. Eluxadoline should also be under the supervision of a specialist in gastrointestinal disorders.
- The European Medicines Agency is reviewing the use of ulipristal acetate for the treatment of uterine fibroids, in light of several reports of liver injury. This review relates only to ulipristal acetate (Esmya) 5 mg tablets - there have been

no reports for ellaOne (single-dose [30 mg] ulipristal acetate), which is authorised for use as an emergency contraception.

NHS England/Public Health England

- Public Health England has advised that measles outbreaks have now been confirmed in several areas of England. This is linked to large outbreaks that are ongoing in Europe (currently in Romania, Italy and Germany), with cases reported in people who had not had the complete 2 doses of the MMR vaccine. This serves as an important reminder for parents to take up the offer of MMR vaccination for their children, and to contact their GP if there is uncertainty about their child's vaccination history (*see PHE advice on vaccine catch up*). The PHE update is also encouraging people to ensure their MMR vaccines are up-to-date before travelling to countries with ongoing measles outbreaks. (*See also the advice above, issued by HPS*)

Other news

- The useful Specialist Pharmacy Service resource "Suggestions for Therapeutic Drug Monitoring in Adults in Primary Care" has been updated.
- An article in JAMA Intern Med has highlighted a 1.5 fold increase in the risk of a cardiovascular (CV) event in people with COPD within the first 30 days of taking long-acting inhaled bronchodilators. The risk is independent of previous CV disease or exacerbation history.

Drug update

Launched:

- Trelegy Ellipta (GSK), a combination inhaler containing the inhaled corticosteroid fluticasone furoate, the long-acting beta$_2$-agonist vilanterol and the long-acting muscarinic antagonist umeclidinium, has been launched. This is the second 'triple' inhaler to come to the market, the first being Trimbow. Both are licensed for the management of moderate to severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in adults who are not adequately treated by a combination of an inhaled corticosteroid and a long-acting beta$_2$-agonist, and are both priced at £44.50 for 30 day's treatment (*MIMS; Jan-18*). Trelegy is used once daily, whereas Trimbow is taken twice daily. *Comment*: Advice from the SMC is due in early 2018.
- A previous KINES newsletter noted the launch of Fobumix Easyhaler (budesonide 320 micrograms and formoterol 9 micrograms) dry powder inhaler (DPI), a branded generic inhaler equivalent to Symbicort Turbohaler 400/12. Additional doses are now available and are priced lower than their equivalent Symbicort products (*prices from MIMS, Jan-18*). Current options for budesonide/formoterol DPIs are as follows:

Originator product	Equivalent branded generics that are available	
Symbicort Turbohaler 100/6 120 inhalations = £28	Fobumix 80/4.5 120 inhalations=£26.99	-
Symbicort Turbohaler 200/6 120 inhalations = £28	Fobumix 160/4.5 60 inhalations = £16.99 120 inhalations = £26.99	Duoresp Spiromax 160/4.5 120 inhalations = £27.97
Symbicort Turbohaler 400/12 60 inhalations = £28	Fobumix 320/9 60 inhalations = £26.99	Duoresp Spiromax 320/9 60 inhalations = £27.97
Prices as listed on MIMS on 17/1/18		

Reclassification:

- Viagra Connect (sildenafil 50 mg tablets) has been reclassified from a Prescription Only Medicine (POM) to a Pharmacy (P) medicine. So, from Spring 2018 it will be available without prescription for use by men over 18 who have erectile dysfunction. Pharmacists will need to complete a checklist ahead of supplying Viagra Connect, and it can't be sold to men: with severe cardiovascular disorders; at high cardiovascular risk; liver failure; with severe kidney failure; or who are taking certain interacting medicines. Use in these groups must remain under the supervision of a qualified prescriber. The recommended retail prices for Viagra Connect are: 4 Tablet Pack £16.66; 8 Tablet Pack £29.16 (excluding VAT)

On the horizon:

- A positive opinion has been issued for semaglutide (Ozempic; Novo Nordisk), a once-weekly glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) receptor agonist. A final decision on approval is expected in the new few weeks.