

Important New Evidence Service In Partnership with The Centre for Medicines Optimisation at Keele University

ScriptSwitch Monthly Summary – October/November 2017

Monthly News Update: Scotland Edition

Welcome to the first '**KINES**' *Monthly News Update: Scotland edition*. This update includes items relevant to pharmacists and prescribers in Scotland, alongside selected articles from the KINES UK newsletter that may also be of interest.

All KINES content is available via login at the [KINES website](#). Healthcare professionals working in organisations that subscribe to ScriptSwitch can [request access](#) this website. Other recent KINES Updates have discussed:

- a [study](#) investigating unwarranted claims of clinical efficacy in visits from pharmaceutical sales reps for drugs approved on the basis of surrogate outcomes only. It is uncertain how these findings relate to the UK, but the study highlights that such promotional activities do occur and that prescribers should be aware of this.
- [the CANTOS RCT](#), which found that canakinumab 150 mg every three months significantly lowered the incidence of recurrent cardiovascular events compared with placebo. However, there was no significant difference seen with other doses and no effect on all-cause mortality. Benefits also need to be balanced against the increased risk of infection (and death due to infection) and the substantial costs of this treatment.
- the [TOSCA.IT RCT](#), which found no significant difference in cardiovascular events between treatment with a sulfonylurea and pioglitazone in people with type 2 diabetes inadequately controlled with metformin.

Scotland Update:

Policy update

- Pharmacy features heavily in the latest [GP contract offer](#) from the Scottish Government, through the pharmacotherapy service, which builds on the existing Primary Care Investment Fund and [Achieving Excellence in Pharmaceutical Care](#). The Royal Pharmaceutical Society in Scotland [has responded](#), noting: "It is important that pharmacists recognise they have professional autonomy for their area of expertise, working alongside GPs and other members of the primary care team. Professional accountability must remain within the pharmacist's own jurisdiction and we are therefore pleased to see this autonomy explicitly stated in the document." The contract is currently out for consultation and a vote will be undertaken in early 2018. Implementation is likely from April 2018.
- The Scottish Government Effective Prescribing and Therapeutics Branch is currently undertaking a consultation on refreshed national prescribing strategies for respiratory and type-2 diabetes. These are predominantly aimed at Primary Care clinicians and Health Board medicines optimisation teams. Contact details for the Branch are [available here](#). Health Boards are consulted through Directors of Pharmacy and the Scottish Prescribing Advisors Association.
- As part of the Pharmacy First initiative, community pharmacies will be able to prescribe treatments for impetigo and uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women from December this year. Pharmacies will use CPUS prescriptions to supply treatment, and be required to follow Health Board-issued Patient Group Directions (PGDs).

Scottish Drug Tariff update

- Freestyle Libre has been added to the Scottish Drug Tariff at a cost of £35 per month. The tariff recommends that this only be prescribed after assessment by an appropriate specialist. **Keele's comment:** Within the UK, both [NICE](#) and [RMOC](#) have recommended that the technology may be suitable in specific patient groups. Discussions are ongoing within NHS Scotland Boards - local Managed Clinical Networks will provide Board-level positions.
- The following lines have been removed from Part 7S/Part 7U of the Scottish Drug Tariff. As of 1st November, any prescriptions are required to be authorised by the Health Board through the usual specials authorisation process.

Epistatus Buccal prefilled syringe SF	Solution	10mg/1ml	4
Midazolam Buccal prefilled syringe SF	Solution	10mg/1ml	4
Omeprazole Oral	Suspension	10mg/5ml	75ml
Omeprazole Oral	Suspension	20mg/5ml	150ml
Omeprazole Oral	Suspension	5mg/5ml	70ml
Ranitidine Oral	Suspension	5mg/5ml	150ml

Antimicrobial prescribing update

- Health Protection Scotland published the [Scottish One Health Antimicrobial Use and Antimicrobial Resistance Annual Report](#) this month. The report shows a mixed picture on antibiotic use in Scotland, including a reduction in Primary Care prescribing.

Other Updates:

Update from The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

- In August, NICE published new guidance on [bisphosphonates for osteoporosis](#). This guideline significantly expanded the population eligible for treatment, recommending bisphosphonates as an option if a person's 10-year fracture risk is 1% or greater. NICE has now published a [decision support tool](#) for this guidance, which presents the effects of bisphosphonates on vertebral and hip fractures based on a 1, 5, 10 and 30% fracture risk, and a discussion about potential side effects.

Other news items

- The BNF publications team is looking for [feedback](#) from users on the **palliative care** content within their publications. Feedback can be submitted via a short [online survey](#).

Drug Update:

New products

- October saw the launch of two more branded generic ICS/LABA combination inhalers:
 - Fobumix Easyhaler 320/9 (budesonide/formoterol) dry-powder inhaler (DPI)**. This inhaler delivers an equivalent dose of **budesonide and formoterol** to Symbicort Turbohaler 400/12 and alternatives.
 - Aloflute** – a pressurised metered dose inhaler (pMDI) containing **salmeterol and fluticasone propionate**. Two strengths of Aloflute are available:
 - Aloflute 25/125** – equivalent to Seretide Evohaler 125 and alternatives (i.e. AirFluSal 25/125, Sirdupla 25/125 and Sereflo 25/125)
 - Aloflute 25/250** - equivalent to Seretide Evohaler 250 and alternatives (i.e. AirFluSal 25/250, Sirdupla 25/250 and Sereflo 25/250)

Neither brand is licensed for use in under 18 year olds.

Keele's comment: Based on the listing in [MIMS](#) (Nov-17), the various budesonide/formoterol and salmeterol/fluticasone propionate inhaler options are summarised in the table below. Some points to note are:

- AstraZeneca (AZ) has announced the price of Symbicort Turbohalers will decrease from 1/1/2018 to £28.00 per inhaler (all strengths). Both current and future costs of Symbicort Turbohalers are therefore included.
- Prices may continue to fluctuate given the increasing competition in this market. If rebate schemes are in place, costs may differ from those quoted below.
- Finally, given the growing number of generic inhalers, it is increasingly important for prescribers to **specify a brand name** on prescriptions to avoid confusion. Patient engagement is essential when considering switching to a different device.

Originator product (£/inhaler)	Equivalent branded generics available			
Budesonide/formoterol DPIs:				
Symbicort Turbohaler 100/6 (£33.00 £28.00 from 1/1/18)	No branded generic alternative available			
Symbicort Turbohaler 200/6 (£38.00 £28.00 from 1/1/18)	DuoResp Spiromax 160/4.5 (£29.97)			
Symbicort Turbohaler 400/12 (£38.00 £28.00 from 1/1/18)	DuoResp Spiromax 360/9 (£29.97)		Fobumix Easyhaler 320/9 (£26.99)	
Salmeterol/fluticasone propionate DPI:				
Seretide 100 Accuhaler (£18.00)	No branded generic alternative available			
Seretide 250 Accuhaler (£35.00)	No branded generic alternative available			
Seretide 500 Accuhaler (£40.92)	Aerivio Spiromax (£29.97)		AirFluSal Forspiro (£29.97)	
Salmeterol/fluticasone propionate pMDIs:				
Seretide Evohaler 50 (£18.00)	No branded generic alternative available			
Seretide Evohaler 125 (£35.00)	Sereflo 25/125 (£23.50)	Aloflute 25/125 (£26.25)	AirFluSal MDI 25/125 (£18.50)	Sirdupla 25/125 (£26.25)
Seretide Evohaler 250 (£59.48)	Sereflo 25/250 (£39.95)	Aloflute 25/250 (£44.61)	AirFluSal MDI 25/250 (£29.95)	Sirdupla 25/250 (£44.61)
The above table includes combination inhaler products and prices (cost per inhaler) as listed in MIMS on 21/11/17, except for Symbicort Turbohalers, where the new price that AZ has indicated that will apply from 1/1/18 is also shown.				

Discontinued products

- Bovine insulin** preparations are to be [discontinued](#) from the end of the year. [Diabetes UK](#) has advised that people currently treated with these preparations are likely to be an older population and at risk of impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia. Choice of alternative insulin should be made with the patient, with input from a diabetes specialist multidisciplinary team, and with particular consideration of hypoglycaemia risk.

On the horizon

- A [positive opinion](#) has been given for the GLP-1 agonist **Bydureon (once weekly exenatide)** to include concomitant use with basal insulin in adults with type 2 diabetes. *N.B.* Other GLP-1 agonists are already approved for use with insulin. **Keele's comment:** As a reminder, NICE [recommends](#) that a GLP-1 agonist in combination with insulin should only be offered following specialist care advice and with ongoing support from a consultant-led multidisciplinary team. The NICE algorithm for blood glucose lowering therapy can be accessed [here](#).