

Medicines Optimisation intervention brief

Medicines Optimisation Incentive Scheme 18/19 – NHSE (Items which should Not be routinely Prescribed in primary care) Interventions - dosulepin

TITLE?
INP1.2 Deprescribe dosulepin
WHAT?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In December 2017 NHS England¹ made the following recommendations regarding dosulepin: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prescribers in primary care should not initiate dosulepin for any new patient All existing patients should have their dosulepin stopped as part of a review of their ongoing treatment If, in exceptional circumstances, there is a clinical need for dosulepin to be prescribed in primary care, this should be undertaken in a cooperation arrangement with a multi-disciplinary team and/or other healthcare professional. The standard procedure for exceptional use of a preparation should be followed
WHY?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dosulepin, formerly known as dothiepin, is a tricyclic antidepressant licensed for the treatment of depression particularly where sedation is required. NICE CG90: Depression in Adults has a “do not do” recommendation: “Do not switch to, or start, dosulepin because evidence supporting its tolerability relative to other antidepressants is outweighed by the increased cardiac risk and toxicity in overdose” Cardiovascular toxicity (cardiac arrhythmias, conduction disorders, cardiac failure and circulatory collapse), is especially a problem in the elderly There is a low margin of safety between the (maximum) therapeutic dose and potentially fatal doses and dosulepin is associated with high mortality in overdose. There are now many safer alternative antidepressants to dosulepin that have fewer side effects which should be used preferentially
WHO?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All patients prescribed dosulepin
TIPS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where there is a desire to continue dosulepin due to exceptional circumstances, the standard procedure for funding exceptional use should be followed
HOW?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search for all patients prescribed dosulepin Patients should be individually reviewed Non-antidepressant options may be appropriate for some patients, especially those taking it for indications other than depression Dosulepin should not be stopped abruptly unless serious side effects have occurred. Slowly tapering the dose over 3 to 4 weeks can help prevent discontinuation symptoms. These



symptoms may include anxiety, flu-like symptoms and insomnia. Some people may require a more gradual tapering of the dose if withdrawal symptoms occur. The doses selected and the speed at which they are reduced will need to be individualised for each patient

- The choice of alternative antidepressant should be discussed with the patient taking into account factors such as depressive symptoms, relative side-effects, physical illness and interactions with other medication
- Follow NICE and Southern Health Depression Guidelines for advice on choice of alternative antidepressants according to the patient's symptoms and co-morbidities^{3,4}
- UKMi have produced guidance on switching between antidepressants.⁵
- Do not initiate dosulepin in new patients with depression but follow the Southern Health Depression Guidelines on choice of antidepressant.⁴

SO WHAT?

- NHS England guidance implemented
- Safer prescribing of antidepressants

FURTHER INFORMATION

1. Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs. NHS England December 2017 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed-in-pc-ccg-guidance.pdf>
2. Dosulepin Review Advice Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust http://mm.wirral.nhs.uk/document_uploads/guidelines/CWPDosulepinGuidanceJuly2015.pdf
3. NICE CG90: Depression in Adults. Updated April 2018 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg90>
4. Southern Health Depression Guidelines http://www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/_resources/assets/inline/full/0/43735.pdf
5. How do you switch between tricyclic, SSRI and related antidepressants? UKMi November 2015 <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/NW-QA150.5-How-do-you-switch-between-TCA-SSRI-and-related-antidepressants-.pdf>
6. PrescQIPP CIC Drugs to Review for Optimised Prescribing - Dosulepin
7. WHCCG Policy Statement reference no. [PS016](#)

