NHS
Suffolk and
North East Essex

Position Statement for Medicines of Low Value

LUTEIN AND ANTIOXIDANTS

Summary

The Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB) does not support the prescribing of lutein and antioxidants e.g. iCaps®, in line with NHS England's national guidance on medicines of low clinical value.

All lutein and antioxidants are classed as "Double Red" i.e., no prescribing in primary or secondary care

There are no patient exceptionalities identified

Lutein and antioxidants (e.g., vitamin A, C E and zinc) are supplements which are sometimes recommended for Age Related Macular Degeneration. A variety of supplements are available to purchase in health food stores and other outlets where they are promoted to assist with "eye health". As the balance of benefits and risks of taking antioxidant supplements for AMD is not currently clear, they are not recommended for prescribing. There is concern that the high doses of vitamins and minerals contained in many supplements marketed for eye health may cause harm in some people. In addition, beta-carotene supplementation has been associated with an increased risk of lung cancer in some groups.

NICE recommends discussing lifestyle advice with people with AMD. Smoking increases the risk of developing AMD two to three-fold and offering smoking cessation is likely to reduce this risk. Additionally, The Royal College of Ophthalmologists recommend a diet rich in fruit and vegetables

DEPRESCRIBING ADVICE

- **Deprescribe lutein and antioxidants for all patients who have these products on repeat or acute**
- Patients should be advised of the lack of robust evidence to support its ongoing use and the products are unlikely to help their condition and may cause adverse effects.
- Patients should be made aware that these cannot be prescribed by GP practices under any circumstances.
- Consider offering the following advice:
    - Signposting to smoking cessation services where appropriate
    - Increasing fruit and vegetable intake
    - Signposting to the macular society (www.macularsociety.org 0300 30301111 who can offer support and further information

Produced by the SNEE ICB Medicines Optimisation Teams (MOT) in collaboration with East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT) and West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (WSFT) version 1.0

Approved by the SNEE Integrated Medicines Optimisation Sub-Committee (IMOC) November 2022 for review November 2024

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NEW PATIENTS

- **Do not prescribe lutein and antioxidants under any circumstances**
- Patients should be advised of the lack of robust evidence to support its use and the products are unlikely to help their condition and may cause adverse effects.
- Patients should be made aware that these cannot be prescribed by GP practices under any circumstances.
- Consider offering the following advice:
    - Smoking cessation where appropriate
    - Increasing fruit and vegetable intake
    - Signposting to the macular society (www.macularsociety.org 0300 30301111 who can offer support and further information

FURTHER SUPPORT

- National Patient Information Leaflets have been developed and can be supplied to patients to help support the deprescribing of these products (click here)
- Patients who wish to seek further clarification can be directed to Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) via:
    - E-mail: sneeicb.pals@nhs.net
    - Telephone: 0800 389 6819

Reference

1. Antioxidant supplements for the prevention of age-related. (2017, November). Retrieved from PrescQIPP: https://www.prescqipp.info/umbraco/surface/authorisedmediasurface/index?url=%2fmedia%2f1045%2fb206-antioxidant-supplements-for-amd-30.pdf
2. NHSE. (2019, June). Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care. Retrieved from https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/items-which-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-v2.1.pdf