NHS
Suffolk and
North East Essex

Position Statement for Medicines of Low Value

PARACETAMOL and TRAMADOL COMBINATION PRODUCTS

Summary

The Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB) does not support the prescribing of paracetamol and tramadol combination products (e.g. Tramacet® combination paracetamol 325mg and tramadol 37.5mg), in line with NHS England's national guidance on medicines of low clinical value.

All paracetamol and tramadol combination products are classed as "Double Red" i.e., no prescribing in primary or secondary care

There are no patient exceptionalities identified

There is no evidence that paracetamol and tramadol combination products are more effective or safer than paracetamol 500mg and codeine 30mg (either as individual drugs or combined as co-codamol 30/500).[1]

Paracetamol and tramadol combination product costs substantially more than other drugs which would be considered at the equivalent step of the World Health Organisation (WHO) analgesic ladder (step 2) without evidence of improved efficacy or safety. The dose of paracetamol in Tramacet® is not optimal. In addition, the increased number of reports of misuse and harms associated with tramadol has resulted in an increase in the number of tramadol related deaths.[1]

DEPRESCRIBING ADVICE

- **Carry out a review of patients who are prescribed Tramacet® or its generic equivalent, with a view to changing to an alternative pain management regime**
- Inform the patient of the reason to switch which includes sub therapeutic doses of paracetamol
- Assess the patient and use a pain score using the Brief Pain Inventory (click here)
- Consider switching to paracetamol 500 mg tablets, at a dose of 1 gram up to four times daily maximum
- A weak opioid (e.g., codeine phosphate) may be added if paracetamol on its own is not considered effective for the patient. Review this and titrate up if necessary, to achieve a similar or improved pain score as Tramacet®

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 initiate tramadol and paracetamol combination products under any circumstances**
- Prescribe paracetamol 1g QDS where required and consider stepping up to a weak opioid e.g., codeine if pain is not managed well

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. PrescQIPP. B62i. Switching Tramacet® to paracetamol alone or paracetamol and codeine 2.1. s.l. : PrescQIPP, February 2014
2. NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners. Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs. s.l. : NHS England, 30 November 2017

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