NHS
Suffolk and
North East Essex

Linezolid Prescribing in Primary Care

Background

Linezolid is an oxazolidinone antibacterial which is only active against gram-positive bacteria including MRSA and glycopeptide-resistant enterococci. While it does not appear in the Suffolk and North East Primary Care Antibiotic Formulary, it may be recommended by microbiology through sensitivities when other antimicrobials are resistant or not suitable. Linezolid is not routinely stocked in pharmacies due to its cost and minimal usage. This fact sheet will provide primary care clinicians with the necessary information about prescribing linezolid and associated monitoring.

Indications

Usual indications for using linezolid in primary care include the following:

- Pneumonia where other antibacterial cannot be used.
- Complicated skin and soft tissue infections

Linezolid will should only be started within primary care based on sensitivity results from microbiology and/or through recommendation via a microbiologist.

Prescribers will need to check to ensure cultures are not sensitive to other antibiotics that are more readily available in primary care before initiating linezolid.

Dosage

600 mg twice daily

Microbiology will be able to advise on the most appropriate course length however treatment must not exceed 28 days.

Contraindications

If a patient required linezolid, a consultant microbiologist should be consulted to ensure that the drug is suitable for the patient before making a prescribing recommendation. If the patient is not suitable for linezolid the consultant microbiologist will be able to advise on other possible alternatives antimicrobials to prescribe.

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The following are contraindications to using linezolid

Contraindicated conditions	Contraindicated medicines
Uncontrolled hypertension	Hypersensitivity to linezolid or excipients
Phaeochromocytoma	Vasopressive agents
Carcinoid tumour	Dopaminergic agents
Bipolar depression	Buspirone
Thyrotoxicosis	Serotonin re-uptake inhibitors
Schizoaffective disorder	Tricyclic antidepressants
Acute confusional states	Triptans
Pregnancy (Studies in animals have shown reproductive toxicity- only use if benefit outweighs risk)	Direct and indirect sympathomimetic agents E.g adrenergic bronchodilators, pseudoephedrine and phenylpropanolamine
Breastfeeding- should be discontinued prior to and while on the medication.	Pethidine
	Patients taking monoamine oxidise inhibitors or have done within two weeks. e.g. phenelzine, isocarboxazid, selegiline, moclobemide

Due to its MOAI like activity, patients taking linezolid should avoid consuming large amounts of tyramine-rich foods such as mature cheese, salami, pickled herring, Bovril®, Oxo®, Marmite® or any similar meat or yeast extract or fermented soya bean extract, and some beers, lagers or wines.

Monitoring

Complete blood counts should be monitored weekly in patients receiving linezolid

Haematopoietic disorders (including anaemia, leucopenia, pancytopenia and thrombocytopenia) has a higher chance of occurring in in elderly patients

If significant myelosuppression occurs, please contact the consultant microbiologist.

All patients should be advised to report symptoms of visual impairment, such as changes in visual acuity, changes in colour vision, blurred vision, or visual field defect. In such cases, prompt evaluation is recommended with referral to an ophthalmologist as necessary.

References

- SPC Zyvox 600mg Film-Coated Tablets Pharmacia Limited Last Updated on eMC 02/08/2016 https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/1688/smpc [Accessed June 2024]
- BNF Online Linezolid https://bnf.nice.org.uk/drugs/linezolid/#indications-and-dose [Accessed June 2024]