

Monthly Prescribing Recommendation March 2015

Oxycodone MR

Your CCG supported the principle of asking GP practices to focus on monthly prescribing topics to deliver further prescribing cost efficiencies. Prescribing is a major contributor to the CCG's overall QIPP plan and the realistic ambition of financial balance. Achieving the latter is essential to qualify for the quality premium payment that can bring significant financial benefits to the CCG, and allow re-investment in primary care in subsequent years. Practices, therefore, are being asked to complete the relative actions before the end of the stated period.

During March, we ask that practices review their prescribing of Oxycodone MR tablets and switch to Longtec or another low cost MR brand where appropriate.

Background

Morphine remains the first choice when a strong opiate is required. Oxycodone is reserved for patients when morphine is not tolerated or is ineffective. After an initial reduction in use of oxycodone MR across HRW CCG there has now been an increase in spend. In addition to reducing the overall use of oxycodone, savings can be made by prescribing a low cost branded preparation when oxycodone MR is considered appropriate. The Drug Tariff price for generic prescriptions is based on the more expensive OxyContin MR preparation. Longtec is one brand that offers good value and therefore we are asking practices to switch patients to Longtec or another low cost brand(e.g. Reltebon).

Nationally there have been examples of medication errors due to confusion between the standard and modified release preparations of oxycodone; prescribing by brand is one way to reduce the risk of confusion. In HRW CCG the annual spend on oxycodone MR preparations was £146K (based on last 6 months data). The potential savings from a switch to a low cost brand such as Longtec are approximately £42K per annum. Figure 1 on the next page shows the weighted spend on oxycodone MR per practice.

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust currently supply OxyContin brand. Longtec are bioequivalent to OxyContin MR tablets and have the same formulation and composition as OxyContin MR. Both products are manufactured by Napp. Longtec are available from Phoenix, Alliance and AAH

Recommendations

Practices are asked to review their prescribing of generic Oxycodone MR and branded Oxycontin MR and switch to Longtec or another low cost brand where appropriate. No action is required if patients are currently prescribed an alternative low cost brand such as Reltebon

NB. equivalent strength: Longtec® tablets are currently only available as 5mg, 10mg, 20mg, 40mg and 80mg. As Oxycodone MR/Oxycontin® MR is also available as 15mg, 30mg, 60mg and 120mg, combinations of tablets may be used to replicate these additional strengths (for example, Longtec® 10mg+20mg BD to replace OxyContin® 30mg BD). This must be communicated clearly to the patient and may not be suitable for all patients e.g. due to confusion. The price of Longtec increases in a linear fashion so using combinations of tablet strengths does not lead to increased costs.

Please ensure that patients and their carers understand that they are being maintained on the same drug but a different brand.

The prescribing support team are available to help practices implement this change and a protocol for this switch including a sample letter to patients is available on request. HRW versions of SystmOne and EMIS formularies will be amended to incorporate this recommendation.

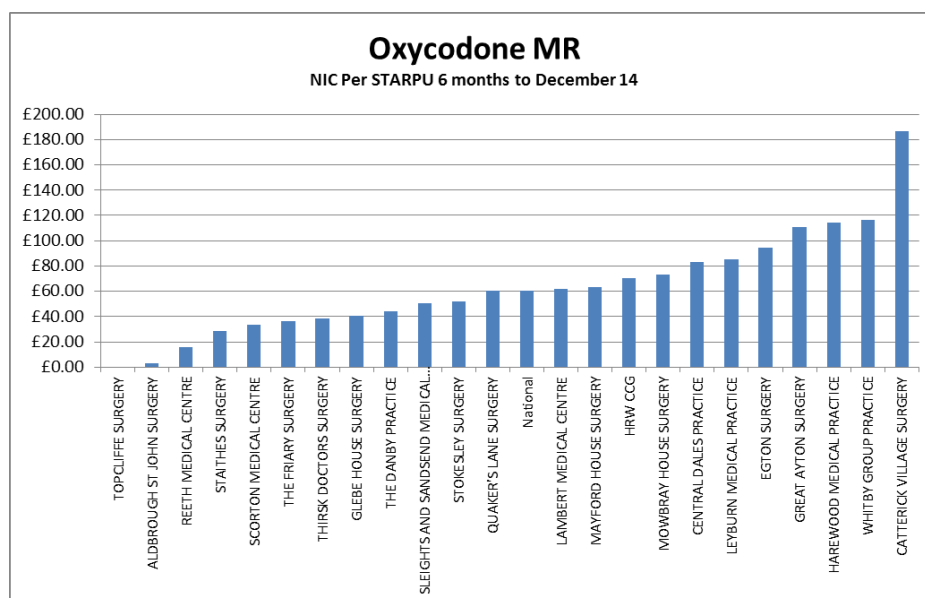
Local community pharmacies have been e-mailed to inform them that practices will be undertaking this switch. As the timings of the switch will vary among practices it is advisable to notify local pharmacies in advance of the switch, and to inform them of the choice of low cost brand, to enable effective management of stock.

Full prescribing details can be found at:

Longtec: <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/26598>

Reltebon: <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/28818>

Figure 1



Should you have any queries, recommendations or ideas about these or future initiatives then we would be pleased to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

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