

## Monthly Prescribing Recommendation February 2016 Pregabalin

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 aim of financial balance. Achieving the latter is essential for the CCG to qualify quality premium payment that can bring significant financial benefits to the CCG, allowing re-investment in primary care in subsequent years. Please note that the prescribing incentive scheme for 2015/16 awards for "agreement to and active change in prescribing as a result of the circulation of monthly prescribing topics to GP practices".

**During February we ask that practices review their branded and generic prescribing of pregabalin (all strengths) in patients taking it for Generalised Anxiety Disorder and switch to Alzain capsules or Rewisca capsules (or a similarly low cost brand) where appropriate.**

**Patients prescribed Lyrica/pregabalin for neuropathic pain should remain on the brand licensed for that indication, but it is a chance to review to ensure therapy remains effective and the dose is optimised.**

### Background

The patent for Lyrica for generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) has expired and both generic and low cost branded generic pregabalin products are now available on the market. The drug tariff price for generic pregabalin is currently based on the branded Lyrica capsules. While the DT price will fall in time, there is no indication of when this will happen or the degree to which it will fall. As things stand, savings can only be made by prescribing using a low cost branded generic product.

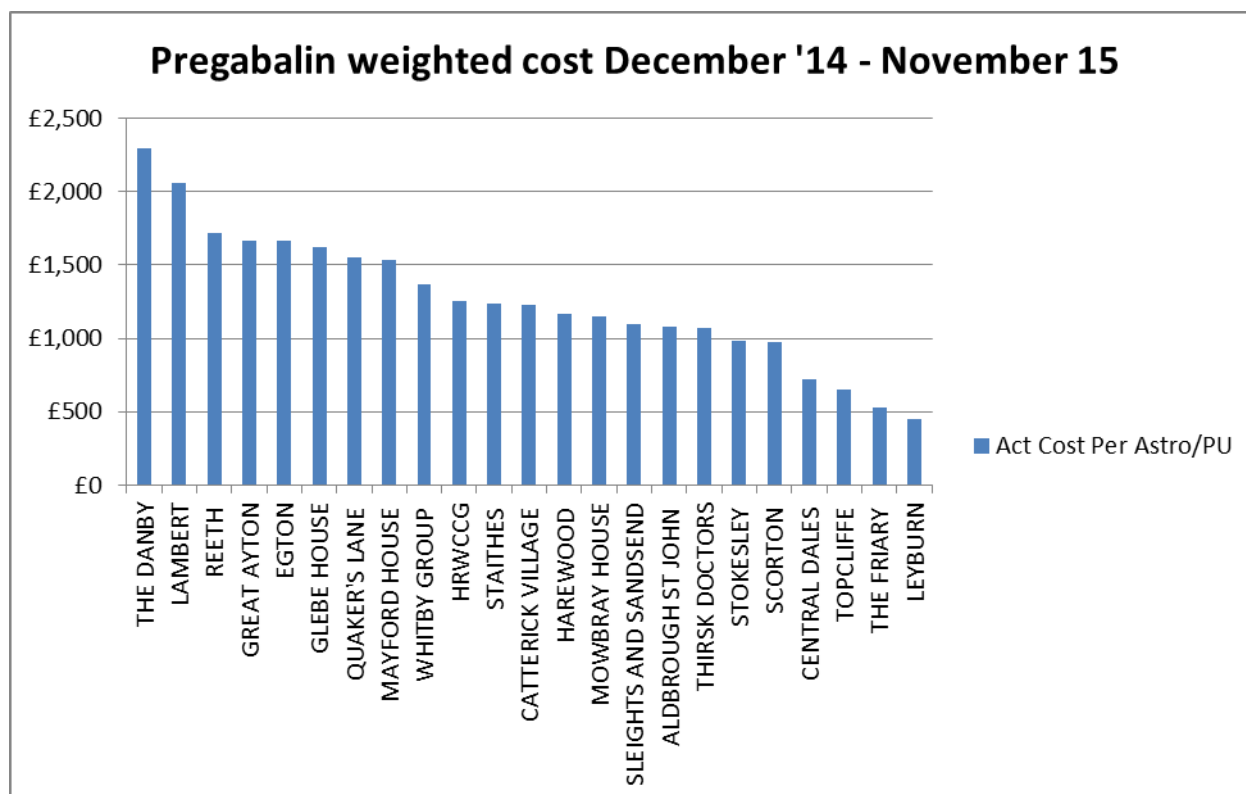
Use of pregabalin varies across the area and the CCG requests that practices take the opportunity to ensure that therapy remains effective for patients and use is in line with guidance.

Alzain® and Rewisca® are low cost brands that are available in all strengths and are licensed for GAD. Due to ongoing legal issues, patients prescribed pregabalin for neuropathic pain should receive Lyrica. With regards to patients prescribed pregabalin for epilepsy, we currently advise that they should receive the same manufacturer's product each time.

In November alone, the primary care spend on pregabalin (generic and branded) in HRW was over £70K (latest 12 month spend to Nov 15 was £750K). The potential number of patients prescribed pregabalin for GAD that can be switched to low cost brand will vary from practice to practice but, from anecdotal evidence, around 13% of patients prescribed pregabalin are prescribed it for GAD. Savings of around £250 per patient per annum are expected to be made, equating to around £30K per annum.

Alzain is available from Alliance, AAH and Phoenix; Rewisca is available from Alliance and Phoenix. The price variation is shown in the table below:

Strength	Generic pregabalin	Lyrica	Alzain	Rewisca
25mg	<b>£64.40</b> 56 capsules	<b>£64.40</b> 56 capsules	<b>£45.08</b> 56 capsules	<b>£45.40</b> 56 capsules
50mg				
75mg				
100mg				
150mg				
200mg				
225mg				
300mg				



## Recommendations

**Practices are asked to review their prescribing of Lyrica and generic pregabalin for patients with GAD and switch to Alzain or Rewisca or a similarly low cost brand. Patients prescribed for pain should remain unchanged but be reviewed to ensure use is in line with guidance, remains effective and uses the minimum number of capsules/dosage times possible. Patients prescribed pregabalin for epilepsy should remain unchanged.**

N.B Alzain and Rewisca are both licenced for GAD but due to legal issues surrounding the patent for Lyrica, patients prescribed for neuropathic pain are not to be switched. The most up to date source of prescribing data is via [www.medicines.org.uk/emc](http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc)

Alzain and Rewisca are available in the same strengths as Lyrica and apply a similar pricing structure whereby all capsules cost the same. It remains important for patients to be on the minimum number of capsules possible to achieve the required dose and the minimum frequency possible.

The prescribing support team are available to help practices implement elements of this change. HRW versions of SystmOne and EMIS formularies will be amended to incorporate this recommendation and a message will also be added to OptimiseRx.

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 to enable effective management of stock.

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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