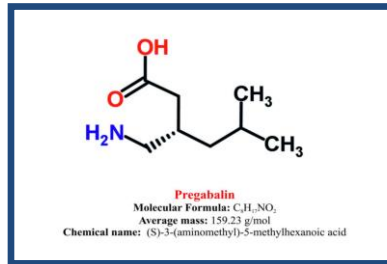


Prescribing tip for information

Pregabalin (Lyrica): reports of severe respiratory depression



Use of pregabalin with opioid medicines or other central nervous system (CNS) depressant medicines has been previously associated with reports of respiratory failure, coma, and deaths. A recent European review of safety data considered reports of severe respiratory depression thought to be related to the action of pregabalin alone on the CNS. The review identified a small number of worldwide cases of respiratory depression without an alternative cause or underlying medical conditions.

A recent [MHRA alert](#) reports that Pregabalin has been associated with reports of respiratory depression, in some cases without concomitant opioid treatment. Consider whether adjustments in dose or dosing regimen are necessary for patients at higher risk of respiratory depression. This includes people:

1. taking other CNS depressants (including opioid-containing medicines)
2. aged older than 65 years
3. with compromised respiratory function or respiratory disease
4. with neurological disease
5. with renal impairment

Pregabalin clearance is directly proportional to creatinine clearance, and dose reductions in patients with compromised renal function should be individualised – see individual [summary of product characteristics](#). The patient information leaflet that accompanies pregabalin is being updated to include warnings about breathing problems.

Similar warnings are already in place for gabapentin (Neurontin), the other gabapentinoid medicine available in the UK - see [Drug Safety Update, October 2017](#).

Gabapentinoids - reminder of advice for dependence and addiction

As of 1 April 2019, pregabalin and gabapentin are controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 as Class C substances and scheduled under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 as Schedule 3.

Existing advice asks healthcare professionals to evaluate patients carefully for a history of drug abuse before prescribing pregabalin and gabapentin and to observe patients for development of signs of abuse and dependence.

Please report suspected adverse drug reactions associated with use of pregabalin to MHRA on a [Yellow Card](#)

To contact the Medicines Optimisation Team please phone 01772 214302

If you have any suggestions for future topics to cover in our prescribing tips, please contact Nicola.schaffel@nhs.net