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NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board

MLCSU Clinical

Prescribing Tip for Information

Launch of UK Licensed version of Metolazone (Xaqua ®) - recommendation to prescribe by brand name

A UK licensed version of Metolazone (Xaqua®) has recently been launched. It is licensed for use in the treatment of

- Oedema in congestive heart failure
- Oedema in renal disease
- Hypertension

It has been rated AMBER 0 by LSCMMG.

Before requesting prescribing in primary care patients must be established on a stable dose of metolazone for at least 2 weeks with stable urea and electrolytes (including creatinine) and a stable body weight before discharge.

Ongoing monitoring of urea and electrolytes (including creatinine) should be carried out on a monthly basis and the patients' weight and blood pressure should be monitored at each clinic visit.

Between 2012 to 2022 there were no licensed UK versions of metolazone and any patients requiring metolazone would have been prescribed an unlicensed imported preparation. One such unlicensed product Zaroxolyn® is imported from Canada and is listed in the BNF.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) recommend **when prescribing an unlicensed medication that if a UK licensed product can meet the clinical need, even if off-label, it should be used in preference to an unlicensed product.**

It is believed that Xaqua® may have up to a two-fold difference in bioavailability compared to other unlicensed preparations. Patients unintentionally switched between products may experience toxicity or subtherapeutic effects because of difference in bioavailability.

Metolazone brands are not interchangeable. To prevent inadvertent switching, it is recommended that all prescriptions for Metolazone are written by brand name.

Advice for prescribers if switching from unlicensed (imported) metolazone to Xaqua® (UK licensed metolazone) or vice versa.

- A dose adjustment may be necessary, and patients should be individually titrated based on their response and tolerability of the new formulation.
- Patients should be monitored for signs of dehydration and electrolyte disturbance.
- Switching from the unlicensed (imported) product to Xaqua® may require a reduction in dose by half, or for the same dose to be used but the frequency adjusted from daily to alternate days.
- If a dose reduction is required when switching to Xaqua® it may result in a dose which requires the tablet to be split.

Patients currently prescribed generic metolazone should be identified and contacted to ascertain if a specific brand of metolazone is currently being dispensed.

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