

## Prescribing Tip For Information

### Documentation of Medication Allergies and Adverse Reactions



The [NICE quality standard on drug allergy](#) states 'Consistent and comprehensive recording of drug allergy status is important to ensure that all patients with confirmed or suspected drug allergy have a full and accurate record of this in their electronic medical record. Accurate recording of drug allergy status will prevent the prescription and administration of drugs inducing allergic reactions and will improve patient safety'.

**A Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) study showed that drug allergies and adverse drug reactions accounted for approximately 62,000 hospital admissions each year in England. There is also evidence that these reactions are increasing: between 1998 and 2005, serious adverse drug reactions rose 2.6-fold.**

[NICE guidance on drug allergy: diagnosis and management](#) highlights some of the major issues which arise from poor clinical documentation of drug allergy status or a lack of patient understanding. Care records are often unable to distinguish between intolerance and drug allergy which can lead to some patients being falsely labelled as having a drug allergy. Incomplete records may result in patients inadvertently taking a drug they are allergic to.

In certain situations, treatment decisions must be made in a short period of time and the having access to accurate detailed records can advise the care and treatment of a patient. For example, if a patient has a penicillin allergy recorded but no information regarding the severity of this reaction – the clinician's choice of treatment options, and potentially the outcome for the patient, could be adversely affected.

Patients may be unable to communicate medication allergies to clinicians, for example if they are seriously unwell, unconscious or have barriers to communication. In these situations, the electronic record is the only source of information available and highlights the importance of **accurate** record keeping.

*NICE recommends to record, at the minimum: the drug name / signs, symptoms and severity / date of reaction*

#### **OPPORTUNITIES TO UPDATE ALLERGY INFORMATION**

- *Healthcare interactions with the patient / carer*
- *Details recorded within clinical letters*
- *Discharge information*

Further reading: **BSACI** – Improving Allergy Care: <https://www.bsaci.org/>

**Yellow Card Scheme:** Patients, caregivers, and all healthcare professionals, including students, are encouraged to report any suspected adverse drug reactions to the [Yellow Card Scheme](#)

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](mailto:Nicola.schaffel@nhs.net)