

Welcome to the **COVID-19** K&M Medicines Optimisation (MO) news update.

Articles in this week's edition include:

- Valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme: Temporary Advice For Management During COVID-19.
- Changes to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations (2001)
- Palliative Care Update
- Clenil Modulite® 100mcg (Beclometasone) Inhalers Batch Variation
- COVID-19 & Yellow Card Reporting
- Shortages Update

Access a list of Medical Specialties/ Professional Body advice with direct links to their respective COVID-19 published guidance [here](#)

Please send all medicines queries relating to COVID-19 and any further points of clarification for the articles written to:

wkccg.gpscovid19@nhs.net

Valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme: Temporary Advice For Management During Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The MHRA has produced guidance for specialists for initiation of valproate in female patients and for annual review and pregnancy testing to support adherence to pregnancy prevention requirements during the pandemic.

The guidance states the following:

Initiation:

Initiation of valproate in girls and women of childbearing potential requires face-to face consultation (with appropriate social distancing) except where a patient is shielding. A remote consultation should be considered for shielded patients.

Annual Reviews:

Annual reviews should not be delayed due to the pandemic. Specialist prescribers should undertake video virtual consultation (preferably) or telephone consultation (if video is not possible) with the patient. Please access link for full advice on arrangements for annual reviews.

Pregnancy testing:

Home pregnancy testing could be acceptable at the discretion of the clinician provided certain criteria are met. Please access link for full guidance.

Access full guidance [\(here\)](#)

Changes to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations (2001)

The Government has amended the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (MDR), providing Ministers with emergency powers concerning the supply of controlled drugs in specified circumstances during a pandemic.

Please note these flexibilities have not been activated at this time.

The purpose of the changes is to ensure registered community pharmacies can continue to supply patients with essential medicines at critical times during a pandemic. **The regulations are enabling so may be used only if 'activated' or 'switched on' when announced by the Secretary of State and applied in very limited circumstances.**

These 3 changes to the MDR give ministers the option to switch on additional flexibilities during a pandemic to allow:

1. Emergency supply of a CD without a prescription
2. Emergency supply of a CD against a Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP)
3. Emergency change to a CD instalment direction with the agreement of the prescriber

It is anticipated that these provisions will be used in infrequently, and would only be used if demand and workforce pressures during a pandemic meant that local health services were at imminent risk of failing to fulfil their duties.

At this time there is no change in practice until the flexibilities introduced by the legislation are activated by an announcement from the Secretary of State

A copy of the Statutory Instrument can be found [\(here\)](#)

Palliative Care Update

As a reminder, the palliative care formulary and full list of pharmacies across Kent and Medway commissioned by the CCG to stock limited supplies of end of life drugs is attached.. The CCG continues to undertake reviews to ensure that we have an accurate position regarding the current stocks available and communicate this to providers. Any concerns should be sent to KMCCG.WKCCG.medman@nhs.net.

Clenil Modulite® 100mcg (Beclometasone) Inhalers Batch Variation

Chiesi, Manufacturer of Clenil Modulite®, has reported that due to an increased demand, additional batches of (beclometasone) 100mcg are to be released into the UK supply chain following authorisation by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Patients should be informed that these inhalers will contain the same medication as before, beclometasone, in the same inhaler device (pressurised metered dose inhaler; pMDI). Therefore there is no required change to either the way prescriptions are written, or the way patients manage their asthma.

The only differences in the batch variation are related to the appearance:

- The colours of the plastic actuator and protective cap are beige and yellow respectively (instead of brown and beige respectively).
- The beige actuator is not embossed.
- There is no dose indicator

The manufacturer assures that the differences have no effect on the safety profile (adverse effects) of the medicine; however, patients should be supported and advised to have increased vigilance for when they may need a new inhaler and should confirm the dosage on the labelling of the outer package and canister.

These batches are likely to come into circulation from 11th May 2020. The full update including full details of concerned batch numbers can be found at the following website link ([here](#)).

COVID-19 & Yellow Card Reporting

The MHRA has launched a dedicated Yellow Card site for healthcare products that are used in COVID-19 treatment to allow easy reporting. Healthcare professionals, patients and carers are asked to report all suspected side-effects to medicines or medical device adverse incidents related to COVID-19 treatment.

Access website ([here](#))

Shortages Update

Ranitidine update	Ranitidine 50mg/2ml injection is anticipated to be unavailable from the end of May 2020 until further notice. Ranitidine film-coated tablets, effervescent tablets and oral solution continue to remain unavailable with no date for resupply. Prescribers should continue to follow the UKMi guidance on management of affected patients, available (here).
Lorazepam 4mg/ml solution for injection (Ativan)	Supply disruption anticipated until w/c 15th June 2020. Pfizer have confirmed they will retain sufficient stock of to ensure ongoing supplies remain available for community pharmacies throughout this period. Supplies for community pharmacy accounts should continue to be ordered via Alliance Healthcare using PIP code 8019127.
Salazopyrin (Sulfasalazine) 500mg suppositories	Out of stock until w/c 1 st June. Limited supplies of Salofalk (mesalazine) 500mg suppositories will be available w/c 18 th May. Pentasa (mesalazine) 1g suppositories remain available during this period. See the alert for guidance on managing affected patients.