

Welcome to the **Kent & Medway** Medicines Optimisation (MO) news update.

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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 the articles written to:
wkccg.gpscovid19@nhs.net



Spotlight- Delirium in COVID-19



In patients with COVID-19 infection, delirium may occur in a number of different scenarios. These include patients:

- with pre-existing delirium who become infected;
- who develop delirium in conjunction with infection
- who are intubated in ICU settings who are delirious on extubation and/or removal of sedation.

The main goal of the treatment of delirium should be to treat the underlying cause. The use of non-pharmacological therapy should be employed where possible. Pharmacological management of delirium in patients with COVID-19 should include keeping the use of sedatives and antipsychotics to a minimum. Other important factors to consider:

- risks of drug-drug interactions and adverse drugs effects with psychotropic and pharmacological therapy used in the management of COVID-19 patients.
- The use of benzodiazepines in non-ventilated COVID -19 infected patients may be unsafe due to possible compromised respiratory function.

Supply of Additional Direct Oral Anticoagulants (DOACs) During COVID-19

To help protect patients and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic; NHS England published a [clinical guide](#) for the management of anticoagulant services during the coronavirus pandemic.

The guide advises that patients taking warfarin may be changed to a DOAC, where clinically appropriate.

Further to this, NHSE recently announced that in addition to the currently available DOAC stock, it has secured further supplies of **Apixaban** and **Rivaroxaban** for up to 200,000 additional patients in England.

This should provide assurance to patients and clinicians that there will continue to be adequate stock in the DOAC supply chain to manage the inevitable increase in demand for DOAC treatments.

Clinicians are advised to continue to prescribe DOACs, as normal, based on clinical need and locally agreed protocols.

Flu Vaccination Programme 2020/21

Practices will have recently received a letter detailing which groups are eligible for the flu vaccination this autumn, setting out actions that can be taken to prepare for this autumn's vaccination campaign. It is more important than ever that we have effective plans in place for the 2020/21 flu season to protect those at risk, prevent ill-health and minimise further impact on the NHS and social care.

Due to COVID-19, it is anticipated that there will be an increased demand for the flu vaccine in the 20/21 flu season, please ensure that your practice has ordered sufficient stocks of the most appropriate flu vaccine for each cohort as outlined in the DES specification.

Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD) Update

The requirement for patient consent to enable the use of eRD has been temporarily suspended until 30 June 2020 at which time the suspension will either be extended or revoked.

This has been granted by the National Health Service (Amendments Relating to the Provision of Primary Care Services During a Pandemic etc.) Regulations 2020, in agreement with the Secretary of State.

Practices in England may transfer any clinically suitable patient onto eRD if they are already receiving, or have agreed to receive electronic prescriptions. This includes any patient who has previously had medication dispensed by means of EPS, any patient who has recorded a nominated pharmacy or any patient whose practice is live with EPS Phase 4.

Please access the letter from NHS England providing detailed guidance and support on implementation ([here](#))

Supply and Shortages Update

Acetazolamide Slow Release 250mg capsules	Out of stock until the end of July 2020. Acetazolamide immediate release 250mg tablets remain available. Limited supplies of unlicensed imports of acetazolamide SR 250mg capsules are also available.
Bupropion (Zyban) 150mg prolonged release tablets	Expected to be out of stock from until the end of September 2020. Champix (varenicline tartrate) and various nicotine replacement therapies remain available.
Valaciclovir 500mg tablets	Ranbaxy and Aurobindo (the generic suppliers) are both out of stock with resupply dates to be confirmed. GSK, the supplier of the brand Valtrex, has confirmed sufficient supplies are available to meet normal UK demand.
Valproate semisodium (Depakote) 250mg tablets	Out of stock. Resupply date expected early July (previously expected early April). Limited supplies of Depakote tablets are available from parallel import companies. Alternative brands of valproate semisodium tablets (Syonell and Belvo) are also available.
Staneq® (levodopa/ carbidopa/ entacapone) tablets – various strengths – Update	100mg/25mg/200mg (packs of 30) out of stock until Mid-July 2020. 150mg/37.5mg/200mg (pack of 100 only) out of stock until early August 2020. All other Staneq presentations remain available during this time. Supplies of Sastravi or Stalevo tablets (which are considered equivalent), continue to remain available.
Metoprolol 50mg and 100mg tablets	Aurobindo-Milpharm, the sole supplier in the UK, has a long-term shortage affecting metoprolol 50mg and 100mg tablets; supply is likely to be intermittent for several months. See the UKMi memo link for information about management options. The manufacturer of carvedilol has indicated it would be unable to meet demand if patients were switched to this product. Manufacturers of bisoprolol, atenolol and propranolol have indicated they have capacity to support any additional demand on their products.
Danazol 100mg and 200mg capsules	Danazol 100mg and 200mg capsules have been discontinued in the UK and remaining supplies of both strengths are now exhausted. Danazol has several licensed indications and off-label uses. Limited supplies of unlicensed danazol 100mg and 200mg capsules are available. See the MHRA alert for advice on the management of affected patients.
Fluoxetine 10mg tablets	Due to ongoing supply issues, the Serious Shortage Protocol for fluoxetine 10mg tablets (SSP05) which was introduced on 12 March 2020, is being extended to 11 September 2020 (previously due to end on 12 June 2020).

Local ICP Update

Last Friday we sadly said goodbye to one of our team, Bevan. I am sure you will agree that Bevan was a great asset and will be truly missed by all!