



Dear Colleague

STEROID TREATMENT CARDS

1. The purpose of this letter is to remind all healthcare professionals involved in the treatment of patients receiving steroid therapy of the importance of issuing steroid treatment cards where appropriate. New advice in relation to prolonged use of high doses of inhaled steroids is highlighted in the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency/Commission on Human Medicines publication "Current Problems in Pharmacovigilance" Volume 31, May 2006*, which can be accessed at www.mhra.gov.uk (see below for link to the relevant page).
2. The card is needed because treatment with systemic corticosteroids suppresses the adrenal and immune responses. This has a number of potentially serious consequences including adrenal crisis if steroid treatment is stopped abruptly or there is some other physiological stress, or overwhelming infection. This is particularly important in relation to patients who require prolonged treatment with systemic steroids or high doses of inhaled steroids.
3. The steroid treatment card gives guidance to the patient on minimising risk and provides details of the prescriber, drug, dosage and duration of treatment. It also carries a series of instructions for the patient and informs health professionals to whom the patient shows the card that they are receiving systemic corticosteroid treatment.
4. All patients prescribed systemic corticosteroids for periods of more than three weeks should receive a steroid treatment card at the outset of treatment. For patients on systemic corticosteroids for three weeks or less and patients prescribed topical, inhaled or nasal corticosteroids, a card may be issued at the discretion of the prescriber or pharmacist. When issuing a steroid treatment card instructions on the use of the card should be given to the patient.

**From the
Chief Medical
Officer, Chief Nursing
Officer and Chief
Pharmaceutical
Officer**

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For action

Medical Directors, NHS Boards
(to cascade to General
Practitioners, Out of Hours
Services, Locum Services and
Dispensing Doctors; all Hospital
Doctors; Directors of Nursing – to
cascade to all relevant nurses;
Chief Pharmacists – to cascade to
specialist pharmacists and
dispensing services)
Specialists in Pharmaceutical
Public Health (to cascade to
Community Pharmacists)
Scottish Prison Service

For information

Directors of Public Health
Chief Executives of NHS Boards
NHS24

Further Enquiries

Mrs P Warrington, Deputy Chief
Pharmacist, 1E.02A, St Andrew's
House

5. The card has spaces for details of the patient, the GP, the hospital and consultant to be completed. In addition there is space for information on drugs and doses prescribed. The prescriber should try to ensure that this information is kept up to date. When the card is full a new one should be issued.

6. Pharmacists dispensing systemic corticosteroids or high doses of inhaled steroids should check that the patient has been given a steroid treatment card and, if not, issue one if they consider it appropriate. They should inform the prescribing doctor that they have done so.

7. Stocks of the card may be obtained from:

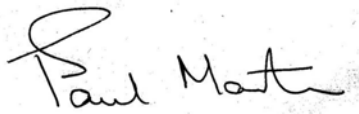
Banner Business Supplies
Unit 2
Kingsthorpe Park
Hauston Industrial Estate
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EH54 5DP

Tel: 01506 448440

Yours sincerely



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Chief Medical Officer



Mr Paul Martin
Chief Nursing Officer



Professor Bill Scott
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

*Link to "Current Problems in Pharmacovigilance" (CPIP) May 2006:

http://www.mhra.gov.uk/home/idcplg?IdcService=SS_GET_PAGE&useSecondary=true&ssDocName=CON2023859&ssTargetNodeId=368