

# Medicines Optimisation Update

## Prescribed Inhalers for people with COPD

### What this includes:

This indicator ensures that prescribers are using the most cost effective Inhaled Corticosteroids (ICS) and ensuring that ICS and Long-acting Beta2-agonist (LABA) combination are prescribed in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) within their licensed indications.

### Identifying the problem:

Medicines optimisation website:

<http://medicines.necu.nhs.uk/guidelines/cumbria-guidelines/>

Prescqiip audits:

<https://www.prescqiip.info/respiratory#copd-audit-tools>

<https://www.prescqiip.info/resources/send/69-inhaled-therapy-in-copd/2365-b109-copd-update>

### Suggested actions:

- The criteria for triple therapy (ICS+LABA+LAMA) in COPD guidelines is a Forced Expiratory Volume (FEV)<sub>1</sub><50% and two or more exacerbations per year<sup>1</sup>. Identify patients who are using triple therapy for COPD and audit these patients using the COPD care bundle. Step down then stop treatment of ICS where necessary (if previous asthma then leave on low dose ICS).
- Check licensed ICS/LABA combinations are being used, Fostair<sup>®</sup> metered dose inhaler (MDI), Relvar<sup>®</sup> Ellipta<sup>®</sup>, Duoresp Spiromax
- Symbicort<sup>®</sup> is no longer on the Lothian Joint Formulary so potential cost savings if patients are swapped to Fostair<sup>®</sup> MDI, Relvar Ellipta<sup>®</sup> or Duoresp<sup>®</sup>
- Ensure Cumbria COPD inhaler choice guidelines are being used in practices detailing current inhaler choices and position of treatment<sup>3</sup>
- Agree a self-management plan with the patient and liaise with local community pharmacists to carry out regular inhaler technique checks following changes to patient's inhaler devices.
- Potential cost savings are available when prescribing long-acting bronchodilators such as the LABA/LAMA (Long-Acting Beta-Agonist/Muscarinic Antagonist) combinations (Anoro Ellipta<sup>®</sup>, Duaklir Genuair<sup>®</sup>, Spiolto Respimat or Ultibro Breezhaler), if patients currently using separate LABA and LAMA inhalers are swapped to combination<sup>2</sup>.
- Tiotropium handihaler is no longer on the Lothian Joint Formulary so potential cost savings if patients are switched to a more cost efficient device such as Acclidinium (Eklira Genuair<sup>®</sup>), Umeclidinium (Incruse Ellipta<sup>®</sup>), Glycopyrronium (Seebri Breezhaler) or Tiotropium (Spiriva Respimat).
- Although Salmeterol is on the Lothian Joint Formulary potential cost savings if patients are switched to a more cost efficient device such as Formoterol Easyhaler.

#### Considerations to support choice of inhaler:

- Cost – Can vary widely between very similar products that may be equally acceptable to the patient.
- Choice-Use Cumbria inhaler choices as a guide, bearing in mind cost when choosing first line.
- Patient preference – Take into account patient lifestyle and ability to use the inhaler before adding to repeats
- Consistency- Try and be consistent with inhaler device choices in order to minimise differences in techniques needed by the patient

### Suggested actions:

All prescribers should consider non pharmacological treatments such as:

- Smoking cessation should be offered for all COPD patients still smoking, regardless of age<sup>1</sup>. Unless contraindicated, offer Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), varenicline or bupropion, as appropriate, combined with an appropriate support programme to optimise smoking quit rates.
- Lifestyle advice: a healthy weight and regular appropriate exercise can improve breathlessness symptoms for patients with COPD.
- Pulmonary rehabilitation should be available to all appropriate people with moderate-severe COPD, including those who have had a recent hospitalisation for an acute exacerbation<sup>1</sup>
- People with COPD who are prescribed an inhaler have their inhaler technique assessed when starting treatment and then regularly during treatment<sup>1</sup>.

### Resources for undertaking COPD reviews:

- Cumbria COPD Inhaler Choice Guideline:  
<http://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/download/copd-inhaler-decision-tool-north-cumbria/>
- COPD self-management plans available from Lothian website  
[www.lothianrespiratorymcn.scot.nhs.uk/.../Self-Management-Plan-for-COPD\\_Final.pdf](http://www.lothianrespiratorymcn.scot.nhs.uk/.../Self-Management-Plan-for-COPD_Final.pdf)
- Respiratory system, Lothian joint formulary  
<http://www.ljf.scot.nhs.uk/LothianJointFormularies/Adult/3.0/Pages/default.aspx>
- GP Update Manual 2014 <http://www.gp-update.co.uk>

### References:

1. NICE (2010) Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease-Management of COPD in adults in primary and secondary care (partial update) NICE Clinical Guideline 101.2010  
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg101>
2. Lothian Joint Formulary  
<http://www.ljf.scot.nhs.uk/LothianJointFormularies/Adult/Pages/default.aspx>
3. RDTc ICS potency charts and annual costs  
<http://rdtc.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/publications/prescribing-support-cost-comparison-charts-april-2016-0.pdf>