

Procedural Guidance for recommending the issue of Rescue Medication for COPD exacerbations

Practice Authorisation

The following process and rationale must be discussed and agreed by the Prescribing Lead and/or all GPs and the Practice Nurse/s responsible for running respiratory clinics within the practice.

Rationale

Hospital admissions for COPD exacerbations are both distressing for the patient and costly for the NHS. Some hospital admissions may be avoidable by giving patients information on how to recognize the early symptoms and providing them with medication to manage the exacerbation themselves at home with support from their GP and their team. The rescue pack of medication provided has **Prednisolone 5mg tablets** -30mg each morning for 7 days and **Amoxicillin 500mg capsules** -one capsule three times daily for 5 days or **Doxycycline 100mg capsules** - 200mg stat and then 100mg daily for 4 days.

Patient Selection

- Identify appropriate patients by running a search of patients on the practice COPD register:
 - Who have had 2 ISSUES of antibiotics and/or steroids in past 12 months(*n.b. all of these patients will not be appropriate but because of local variation in read coding –this is a starting point*)
- Look through patients' records and exclude patients with cognitive impairment or who are residents in care homes.
 - Highlight and discuss suitability of patients with practice COPD lead
 - (this maybe GP and/or practice nurse)
- Arrange appointments for selected patients and carers with prescribing healthcare professional.
- At the appointment assess suitability for self-management of exacerbation.

- If suitable ,provide written and verbal information covering:
 - Why, when and how to use packs
 - What action to take after starting the packs
 - Coached in the correct use of their existing medication
 - Given a leaflet detailing the actions to take and instruction that this be given to the admitting doctor or nurse at the hospital in the event that the pack does not prevent admission
- Record under COPD problem heading that rescue medication pack has been issued or declined using the readcode: **XaW9D**(*issue of COPD rescue pack*)
- Process prescription for rescue medication:
- **Print as an “acute” issue only (as patient should be reviewed before re-issue)**
- **Print rescue medication on separate prescription form to other medication**
 - **Free text on dosage instructions “ Rescue medication – please mark with expiry date” in addition to the normal dosage instruction**