

October 2007

In this issue:

- NHS 24 and Community Pharmacy - Working together to deliver seamless unscheduled care
- Audit of stoma services - maintaining high standards of care
- Single System Pharmacy in Lothian - Pharmacy Senior Management Team takes shape
- Minor Ailments Service (MAS) update
- Community Pharmacy and the promotion of sexual health
- In the cold.... storage of medicines in refrigerators

NHS 24 and Community Pharmacy - Working together to deliver seamless unscheduled care

NHS 24 would like your help with the promotion of pharmacy services. At peak times 10% of all calls to NHS 24 relate to access to repeat medication. Over a four-day festive period, this could be as many as 9,000 patients who have run out of their repeat medication. Public awareness of the role of the community pharmacists and the services local pharmacies can provide must be raised, to aid the smooth running of the patient journey.

Appropriate for a direct referral?

The direct referral phone number, included in the unscheduled care folder, can be used to speak to a GP or refer a patient on to the Lothian Unscheduled Care Service (LUCS). You may choose to do this:

- ✓ If the patient's symptoms are serious enough to require emergency review by a GP
- ✓ To query a prescription that has been written in the out-of-hours period
- ✓ To request a prescription for an item not covered in the Patient Group Direction (PGD), such as the requirement of controlled drugs where arrangements can be made for the collection of the prescription.

Patients presenting with sore throats or earache may not require antibiotics and self-care is usually adequate over the weekend. Consideration should be given to the urgency of the request - can it wait until their GP surgery re-opens?

Not appropriate for a direct referral?

- × If you have a query regarding formulation switches you can supply an alternative to the medication prescribed, without needing to talk to the prescriber. For example if a patient is unable to swallow amoxicillin capsules, syrup can be supplied as an alternative
- × Drugs of abuse – substitution therapy cannot be prescribed out-of-hours. Community pharmacists are ideally placed to give advice on the management of possible withdrawal symptoms.

Patient Group Direction (PGD) for urgent supply of repeat medicines and appliances

This invaluable service continues to benefit the public. It enables NHS 24 and LUCS to concentrate on patients suffering from serious and urgent symptoms.

PGDs for urgent supply – important points

- You can use the PGD for any patient, including those you do not know or who are not on your Patient Medication Record, and those who do not have physical proof of the requested medicine
- If the patient is not known to you and you are satisfied that they have had previous supplies of the requested medication, the PGD allows you to make a supply up to one prescribing cycle. A shorter length of supply may be appropriate in certain situations, for example, patients requesting antidepressants
- It is essential that counter assistants are aware of the PGD.

Please remember when a patient presents to the pharmacy there is never a need to refer them to NHS 24. The unscheduled care tools should be utilised or advice given. The pharmacist can complete the patient journey.

If you have any questions or comments regarding NHS 24, the GP out-of-hours service or the unscheduled care folder, we welcome feedback and can be contacted at: pharmacyenquiries@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk

Thanks to Geraldine Smith, Regional Pharmacy Adviser, East NHS24.

Audit of stoma services - maintaining high standards of care

Four NHS Circulars were issued between 2005 and 2006 setting out new arrangements for the supply of stoma appliances in the community.^{1,2,3,4} These followed a consultation paper in 2003 and the advent of the new community pharmacy contract. Previously the contract for supply of stoma appliances was incorporated within the pharmacy contract and was also open to appliance contractors. A national tender for the supply of stoma appliances resulted in a new national list of those contracted to supply stoma appliances in primary care and a requirement to adhere to national standards for supply.

As part of these new arrangements, six stoma nurses who had previously been employed by Salts Healthcare shifted their employment to NHS Lothian. While prescriptions currently continue to be prescribed by GPs in NHS Lothian there is potential for changing that service in the future according to patients needs. Any specialist advice on stoma products for NHS patients should be sought from this team of NHS Lothian stoma nurse specialists based at the Western General Hospital. As part of the new service three educational evenings were run by the stoma nurse team for community pharmacists and their support staff in Lothian and these were well attended and received.

As part of this new service an audit was carried out in each NHS Board area to assess the transition to the new service. Audit tools were provided by National Services Scotland and results collated nationally.

Thanks to Aileen Muir, Associate Director of Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Public Health.

Lothian audit results

Patient satisfaction with stoma service provider

Responses were received from 60 patients. There were no differences in patient satisfaction dependent upon supplier. Patient satisfaction was high amongst respondents with an overall satisfaction rating of 5 (excellent) in 79% of respondents. The majority (87%) of patients knew of the national standards for the stoma service, indicating that patient information on the new service had been communicated.

Service provider satisfaction with appliance suppliers

The audit of service provider satisfaction with appliance supplier produced 32 respondents. Satisfaction was generally positive with the majority of respondents rating overall satisfaction as 3 or 4, where 4 was excellent.

The audit demonstrated that patients were happy with the new arrangements and service providers felt able to meet the standards that they relied on suppliers for. The aim of the implementation group to ensure the same high standards of care continued has been achieved.

References

(all available on Scottish Executive Health Department website at www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk)

1. HDL (2005)24. 20 May 2005.
2. HDL (2005)36. 22 August 2005.
3. HDL (2005)54. 18 November 2005.
4. HDL (2006)15. 28 February 2006.

Single System Pharmacy in Lothian - Pharmacy Senior Management Team takes shape

Several key senior appointments to the Lothian Pharmacy Service are now completed. Pat Murray heads up the service as Director of Pharmacy. The Associate Directors are now all in post, with Dorothy Hughes leading the Managed Services (Acute), Sandra McNaughton leading Contracted Community Pharmacy Services and CHP Development and Aileen Muir continuing to lead Pharmaceutical Public Health. 'Site Leads' have also been appointed: Scott Garden (Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh), Sheena Kerr (Western

General Hospital) and Sandy Watson (Royal Hospital for Sick Children). John Heggie continues to lead the pharmacy service at St Johns's Hospital. The Pharmacy Service Senior Management Team is now established and meets monthly. This team has representation from across the pharmacy service specialties, including Education, Research and Development (Moira Kinnear), Quality Assurance (Ann Mair), Scottish Cancer Network (Ewan Morrison), Medicines Management (Anne Gilchrist) and Community Pharmacy (Alan Glauch, Anne Lorimer).

Minor Ailments Service (MAS) update

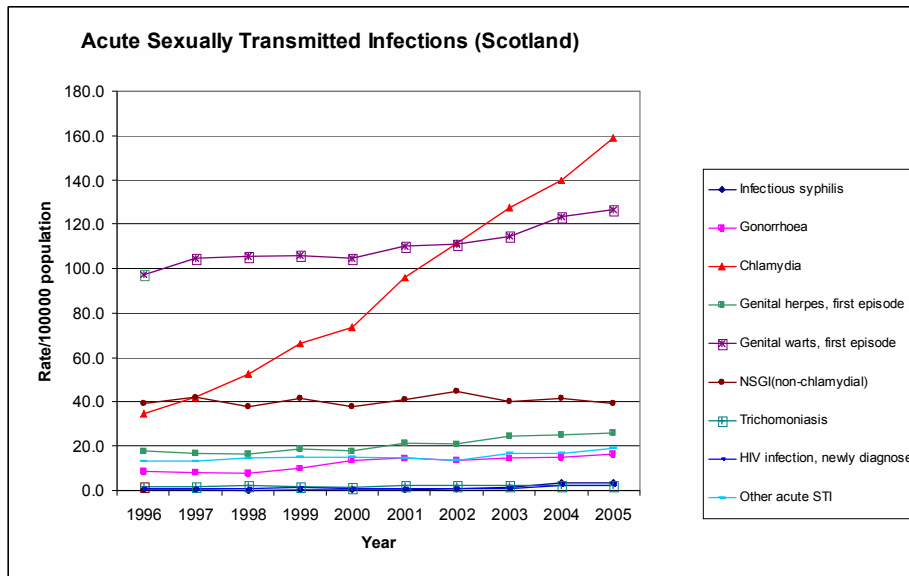
Did you know...

There have been 113,179 eMAS registrations in Lothian up to the end of June 2007. Of 6,563 consultations in the month of June, 38 were recorded as 'advice only' and 26 as referrals. There were 50,000 lapses in registration over the 12 months to September 2007.

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) preparations have not been included in the Minor Ailment Service since July 2007, and will not be passed for payment if prescribed on a CP2 form.

Community Pharmacy and the promotion of sexual health

World AIDS day, on the 1st December every year, aims to highlight the number of people who have HIV and AIDS worldwide. However, with more than 60,000 people living with HIV and more than 7,000 more diagnosed every year in the UK, it is important to keep HIV in mind all year round. There continues to be prejudice and misunderstanding around HIV infection. The rate of infection is increasing in the UK and most cases occur through heterosexual transmission. Other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) occur at higher levels than HIV and are also potentially serious if left untreated. It is always the right time of year to give out messages on sexual health issues.



The graph illustrates acute STIs diagnosed at Scottish genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics. Chlamydia infection has shown an increase in rate over recent years but this is due to increased awareness and ease of diagnosis rather than a genuine increase in incidence.

Community pharmacy is in a position to offer advice on prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, other sexual health problems such as erectile dysfunction and provision of emergency hormonal contraception.

Within the public health service of the new community pharmacy contract is the promotion of healthy living. This can include advice on aspects of sexual health. Taking opportunities during the provision of emergency hormonal contraception to highlight benefits of long term contraception is an important aspect of that consultation. Another key activity is signposting for sexual health services in NHS Lothian. To do this you obviously need to be aware of what services the GUM clinics provide and their contact details.

Clinics treat all information as *extremely* confidential and unless clients give permission, their GP will not be told that they have been there; this includes under 16s.

GUM clinics offer the following FREE services:

- Testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Free condom supplies
- Pregnancy tests and emergency contraception
- Counselling and testing for HIV
- Care and treatment for people who are HIV positive
- Counselling advice and support for anyone concerned about STIs and sexual health.

Lothian GUM services

Main GUM service. Lauriston Building, Lauriston Place, Edinburgh EH3 9HA. Clients do not have to be referred to the clinic by a doctor, and can phone for an appointment or advice on ☎ 0131 536 2103 between 9am–1pm and 2-4.30pm Monday to Friday.

GUM clinic, Howden Health Centre, St John's Hospital, Livingston. With and without an appointment. Clinic times are Monday 6–8 pm and Friday 1.30–3.30 pm. Clients do not have to be referred to the clinic by a doctor, and can phone for an appointment on ☎ 01506 464668.

Other local services

Caledonia Youth Edinburgh www.caledoniayouth.org

5 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh, EH1.

☎ 0131 229 3596

✉ edinburgh.information@caledoniayouth.org

Free sexual health services for all young people up to and including the age of 24 years via clinical, counselling and education sessions.

ROAM Outreach Clinic www.roam-outreach.com

Spittal Street Centre, 22-24 Spittal Street, Edinburgh EH3 9DU

☎ 0131 537 8300

✉ enquiries@roam-outreach.com

Confidential and anonymous out-of-hours walk-in service (no appointment necessary) specifically for gay and bisexual men, available every Monday evening. Services offered include HIV testing, hepatitis A and B vaccinations, hepatitis C, syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia testing.

A distance learning course, 'The Pharmaceutical Care of Sexual Health' has recently become available from NHS Education for Scotland (NES). The NES pack, 'Flavours of Pharmaceutical Public Health' also has a chapter on sexual health. See www.nes.scot.nhs.uk.

Thanks to Aileen Muir, Associate Director of Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Public Health.

In the cold.... storage of medicines in refrigerators

The marketing authorisation for medicines includes specified storage conditions to ensure that quality criteria for the entire shelf life are met. This is important for medicines that need to be stored under refrigerated conditions and even more so for vaccines. It is recommended for refrigerated storage that a medicines specific refrigerator is used - not a domestic model. The latter cannot maintain an internal air temperature of +2 to +8°C with the required degree of accuracy. There is no exact specification for a refrigerator for storage of medicines but the recommendation by NHS Lothian Pharmacy Quality Assurance Services is to use one with fan assisted air circulation to ensure tight control of the storage conditions in terms of the temperature stability and rapid temperature recovery after door opening.

The National Pharmacy Association www.npa.co.uk has produced guidance on standard operating procedures (SOPs) on the storage of medicines at low temperatures. It is suggested that, in addition to this guidance, that the following criteria for refrigerators are met:

- maintain the stored medicines within the temperature range of +2 to +8°C
- only be used for the storage of medicines that require refrigeration (not your lunch or the milk for your tea)
- have a means of indicating the temperature of the products, i.e. thermometer or integral display
- have a means of indicating the current, maximum and minimum temperature experienced by the load
- have automatic defrosting
- can be locked.



It is recommended that the refrigerator be cleaned inside regularly (with detergent and water to remove any grime). The refrigerator must only be filled to the capacity recommended by the manufacturer, usually of the order of half to two thirds full. When packing the refrigerator, gaps should be left to allow air to circulate (either by convection or by the forced air movement created by the fan). It is preferable if the refrigerator has other features, such as wire shelves, that will assist with air circulation in the storage compartment.

Refrigerators used for storage of medicines must be monitored, at least daily when premises are open, but preferably twice daily, usually at the start and at the close of work: at the start of work to ensure the medicines have been stored appropriately overnight and at end of work to

ensure that in use the refrigerator has maintained storage requirements.

Refrigerators should be sited in accordance with manufacturers instructions and kept away from external heat sources such as radiators. An air gap should be left at the back of the refrigerator to allow air to circulate

around the cooling coils and compressor pump. On a regular basis it is advisable to remove any dust or dirt build up from the back of the refrigerator (with the equipment switched off).

A joint letter from Public Health and the Pharmacy Service was recently sent to all GP practices in Lothian on 'Vaccine fridges and storage capacity' ahead of the 'flu season. Guidance on fridges from the Scottish Executive is also expected to be released later this year.

If you are planning to replace one of your fridges or to buy an additional fridge to meet the demands of the 'flu season please contact:

**NHS Lothian Pharmacy Quality Assurance Services,
Western General Hospital ☎ 0131 537 2341.**

Thanks to Jim McDade, Principal Pharmacist, Quality Assurance Services, Western General Hospital.

If you have any comments on Pharmacy News, or wish to contribute to a future issue, please email:

anne.gilchrist@lpct.scot.nhs.uk

Deadline for submitting articles for next issue: end October 2007.

**Read Pharmacy News on the Community Pharmacy website at
www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/HealthBoards/lothian.html**