

Memo - shortage of supply

Re: Levomepromazine Hydrochloride 25mg/ml Solution for Injection

Description of product affected

Levomepromazine is a phenothiazine antipsychotic which acts as an antagonist at the D₂, 5HT_{2A}, α₁ and α₂-adrenergic, H₁ and muscarinic receptor sites.¹ It possesses anti-emetic, antihistamine and anti-adrenaline activity and exhibits a strong sedative effect. It is licensed for the management of pain and accompanying restlessness or distress in the terminally ill patient.^{2,3} In the palliative care setting, it is widely used for terminal agitation and as a second line anti-emetic agent.¹

Background

Sanofi, one of the manufacturers of levomepromazine will be out of stock from the end of this week (12th April 2019) until the end of April. The only other UK supplier, Wockhardt, anticipate they will be out of stock this week due to the unexpected increase in demand; their next delivery has been delayed and further stock will not be available until the end of April.

Alternative agents and management options

Levomepromazine is an essential medication in the inpatient and community setting. Patients on this drug may already have been treated with first line parenteral agents such as haloperidol or midazolam, alone or in combination, for terminal agitation¹; or cyclizine, haloperidol, and metoclopramide for nausea and vomiting¹, where the multi-receptor blockade of levomepromazine makes it a useful choice when symptoms are thought to be due to more than one cause.⁴ Therefore, should stock of levomepromazine run out, management options will need to be determined on a case by case basis, in consultation with the specialist palliative care teams.

References

1. Palliative Care Formulary Sixth Edition, 2017
2. Wockhardt UK Ltd. Levomepromazine Hydrochloride 25mg/ml Solution for Injection. SPC, date of revision of text, 26/04/2017: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/3014>
3. SANOFI. Nozinan 25mg/ml Solution for Injection/Infusion. SPC, date of revision of text, 30 August 2017: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/1428/smpc>
4. London Clinical Networks. Improving the quality of care in the last days of life. A practical guide to getting the medications right (July 2016): <http://www.londonscn.nhs.uk/publication/improving-the-quality-of-care-in-the-last-days-of-life/>

Acknowledgements

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